Commentary

Volume Forty-nine, Number Five, May 1970

IMPERIALISM IN THIS CENTURY
BY GEORGE LICHTHEIM

TRANSLATING THE BIBLE
DAVID DAICHES

THE OBLIGATIONS OF OPPRESSED MINORITIES
MICHAEL WALZER

ON LEA GOLDBERG & S. Y. AGNON
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Z: POLITICS ON FILM
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BOOKS IN REVIEW

MARCUS CUNLIFFE
MARVIN FOX
LEON FRIEDMAN
EDWARD GROSSMAN
DOROTHY RABINOWITZ
IRVIN STOCK
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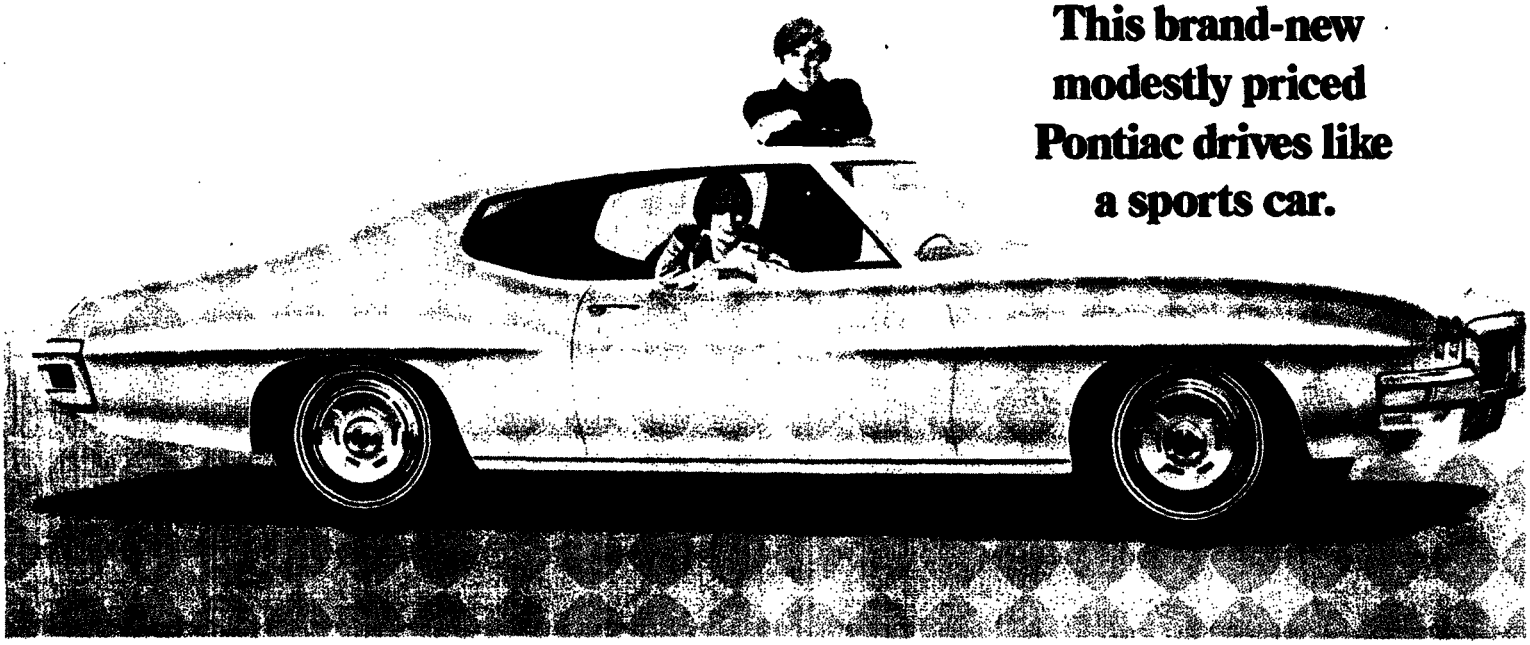

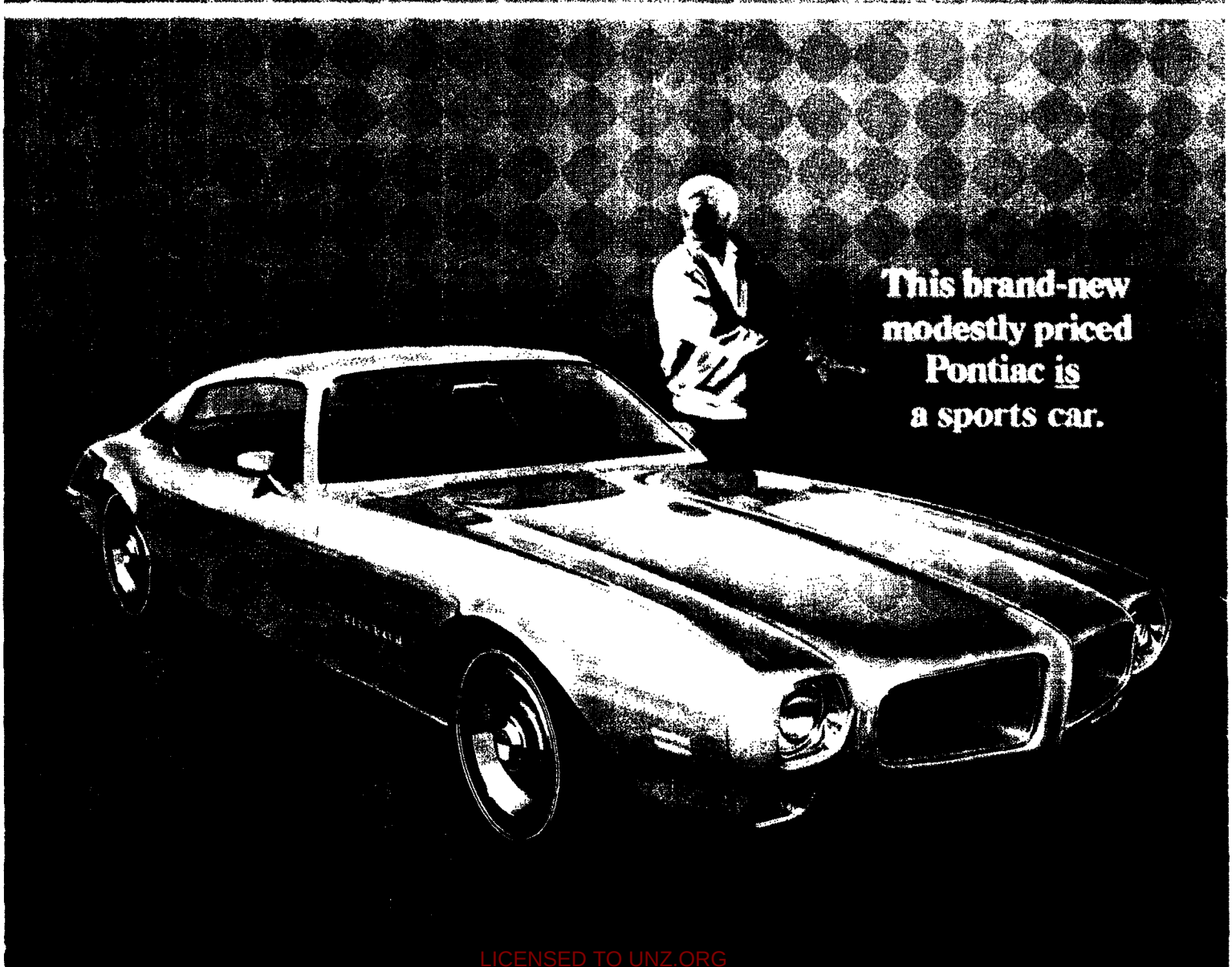

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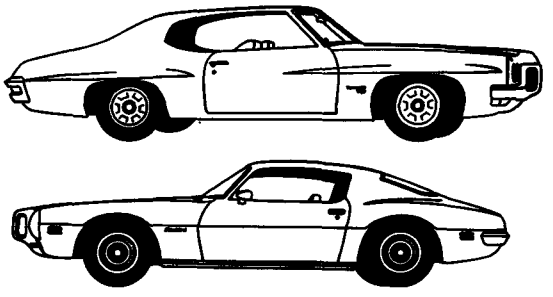
Two more reasons why Pontiac is the No. 1 medium-priced car.

Pontiac's New T-37 Hardtop. (The white beauty shown left.) Believe it or not, this brand-new Pontiac is one of the lowest priced hardtops on the market. Who'd ever guess? And that's the beauty of it. There's enough sports-car look and feel here to keep the nosiest neighbor guessing. And to make you forget you got T-37 for such a low price.

You have a 250-cubic-inch engine and a fully synchronized three-speed manual transmission to work with. And a Wide-Track's way of cutting corners down to size. And a retuned suspension that sits on long-wearing bias-belted tires. And a low-slung, air-slicing kind of styling you just don't see much of in this price range.



And all this time everyone else has been trying to convince you that low-priced cars have to be meek and mild. This one is a Pontiac, remember. So all that sports-oriented equipment shouldn't come as any great surprise. Nor should any of T-37's other non-low-price touches like a hidden radio antenna, protective steel beams in the doors, and patterned-cloth and vinyl upholstery.

No, T-37 is not your average low-priced car. It's built by people who take the fun of driving seriously. Too seriously to let economy spoil all the fun.

Pontiac's New Firebird. (The gold beauty shown left.) There won't be any confusion about what kind of car Firebird is. This is all sports car, from its two large-diameter, high-intensity headlamps to its completely restyled rear deck. A new 250-cubic-inch engine powers it. A manual three-speed transmission moves it. Front disc brakes and rear drum brakes stop it. And a new front stabilizer bar combined with a wider Wide-Track shows curves and corners who's boss.

Then there's the Endura front end. Just to refresh your memory, Endura is a tough rubber-like substance that gives this bumper "bounce." So it can resist dings and dents. And Endura is immune to rust.

Inside Firebird, there's the same kind of common-sense approach to sport. Those bucket-type rear seats make the back of a Firebird more comfortable than the back of a typical sports car. But they do more. The space between them allowed us to raise the drive tunnel. This gives the suspension more room to react to bumps. The ride that results is what you'd expect from a big car. Not a sports car.

Firebird's price is just as surprising as the ride. We'll let your Pontiac dealer tell you about that. But one drive is all Firebird needs to tell you you're getting more car than you bargained for.

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Commentary

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HERE'S WHY WE'RE RUNNING THIS CONTEST: At Smirnoff we're in the entertainment business. We believe people should have fun. At their own pace. In their own way. Just as in our own way we've been providing fun in the best possible taste for years. But we think too many silly rules have cropped up that stop people from having fun.

By "silly" rules we don't mean good rules. Like traffic control laws. Or public health laws. Or responsible behavior. And we don't want to get involved in major political issues that you might consider silly.

We're talking about the silly conventions that cramp your style. The who-knows-where-they-came-from customs standing between you and a more entertaining, rewarding life.

Like the rule that says you've got to squeeze into your most uncomfortable clothes to attend the dullest party of the year. Or the rule that says white wine goes with fish and red with meat.

Hence our "Break a silly rule" contest. We want to hear from you: Smirnoff and non-Smirnoff drinkers alike. Tell us what you think the silliest social rule is—and how you want to break it.

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HERE'S HOW WE'RE RUNNING THIS CONTEST: (To win, unfortunately, you've got to play it according to *our* rules. And we admit some of these are pretty silly.)

1. There are no official entry blanks. Just grab the handiest piece of paper and write us—in 25 words or less *or more*—what you think the silliest rule of social behavior is. And how you'd like to change it.

2. There's only one prize. Just as there's only one Smirnoff. But this prize is fit for a Czar. The winner gets a year's vacation at full pay *plus* expenses anywhere in the world up to a total of $50,000. (For instance, if you're making $10,000 a year we'll match that and throw in another $40,000 for expenses. If you're making more than $50,000, you and your family will have to cut a few corners.)

3. After your year's up? If your present boss doesn't have the welcome mat out, we'll do our very best to help you find a better boss.

4. If you insist, we'll give you the $50,000 in cash. But we'd like this prize to be as unique as Smirnoff itself. And it would do our Smirnoff hearts good to think of you off rollicking for a full year.

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6. You don't need to buy Smirnoff to enter. But it doesn't hurt. Since it's the driest, smoothest liquor you can pour, it just might tickle your imagination along with your taste buds.

7. When this exposé of social silliness is over, *we intend keeping all entries as our property and maybe even publishing the ones we like best*—with full credit to you as author. You'll be able to pick up a copy at your Smirnoff store.

8. If contests are null and void in your state (and this offer *is* void where prohibited) maybe you should consider moving.

9. This contest is only for U.S. citizens over 21. But there's no silly rule that says you can't borrow an idea or two from the kids. Or a friend in another country. After all, Smirnoff *is* the number one choice in vodka around the world.

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11. A silly rule forbids anyone from entering who's employed by or supported by anyone who works for Heublein, its subsidiaries, affiliates and ad agencies or R. H. Donnelley Corp.

12. Entries will be judged by the R. H. Donnelley Corp. Their decisions will be final.

13. Deadlines. To qualify, your entry (entries) must be postmarked no later than July 13, 1970. Any later than that, you're an unlucky loser. The lucky win-a-year-off entrant will be announced the day after Labor Day, and will be notified as soon as possible by mail.

Send your Break-a-Silly-Rule entry (entries) to: Smirnoff, P.O. Box 1000, Dept. T Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10559.

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Letters from Readers

The Unique and the Universal

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In commenting on "Zionism for the 70's," by Robert Alter [February], let me first say that it is difficult to answer someone who extracts a few sentences from a long and, one hopes, closely argued text. I hope that interested readers will turn to what I said and see for themselves.

Nor will I take up Mr. Alter's repetitive attempt to disqualify intellectual argument by suggesting that my language is, *prima facie*, not wholly to be trusted ("rhetorical leap," "lyric exposition," "intimations of self-justificatory strain," etc.). In fact, the sociology and psychology of his accusation are interesting. The gap between those who believe in writing as expressively, as clearly, as personally as they can—the labor of real style—and those who identify sloppy writing and colloquialism with moral honesty is now very pronounced. It tends to divide, for example, a good deal of current English prose from American. In Israel, a point of some irony for the "people of the Word," Abba Eban is persistently accused of "speaking too well," of writing in too fine a style." At a time when leaders of American intellectual life call each other "crooks" in your own journal, and write polemics which are almost incomprehensibly turgid, I think there may still be a place for those who take trouble over language.

But this is incidental.

Mr. Alter finds that I can sustain "a high-sounding note of moral idealism" (again the imputation is one of vague mendacity) because I speak from "the irresponsibility" of my position on the outside. I, of course, emphatically said this in my presentation at the American-Israel Dialogue, but I tried also to explore whether there were not other, equally urgent "responsibilities" at issue. The naive implication that one must be personally on the spot or physically involved in order to feel anguish and to articulate opinion is, surely, scarcely worth refuting. It would bar almost the entirety of the American intellectual community—Mr. Alter included—from commenting on Vietnam. It would inhibit all expressions of moral concern about the Soviet Union. As it happens, this bogus argument of "irresponsibility" is used persistently by Soviet apologists. It was *not* used against me in Israel.

Whether my own private situation concerns Mr. Alter or your readers is a moot point. My essay, "A Kind of Survivor," appeared in COMMENTARY some years ago* and sought to answer the very question Mr. Alter raises. The notion that the way of life I have chosen—and "chosen" is too facile a word—in the Diaspora is, in any way, comfortable and professionally advantageous will strike those who know of me and of my work as somewhat ironic. I live as an uneasy guest, between a number of professional and geographic milieus each of which would offer security, because I absolutely believe that such uprootedness is a decisive part of Judaism, and because, in a very small, personal way, such a mode of life holds trust with that central European humanism and Judaism which Hitler and Stalin made to ruin. I believe that, one day, men will be each other's guests everywhere—otherwise they will have destroyed one another—and am trying, by daily routine, to suggest to my children that a life on the margin of a nation-state, and eccentric to the unexamined loyalties of a political community, is worth pursuing.

As I expressly said at Rehovot, any Israeli has the right to say to me: "Join us, send your children, only this way do you effectively contribute to our survival and future." I must then answer as best I can that Judaism itself may not survive as a moral vision and mystery—the word is perfectly precise whether or not Mr. Alter finds it "high-sounding"—if the values of exile and universalism lapse. But I will continue to respond with undiminished anxiety to the force and truth of the Israeli's question.

But why ought I to listen to Mr. Alter? Is he writing from Israel? Is he planning to emigrate, or, at the least, to send his children there, responding to Ben-Gurion's insistent challenge on that very point? Or could it be that Mr. Alter is

* February 1965—ED.

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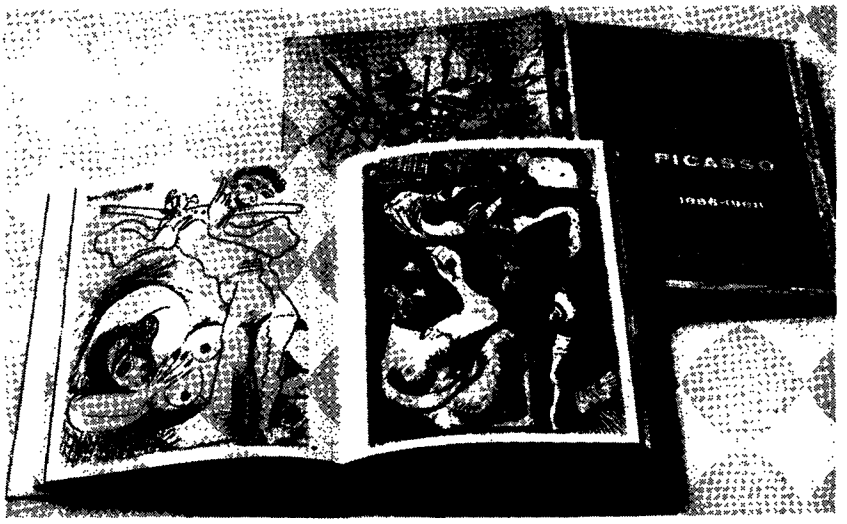

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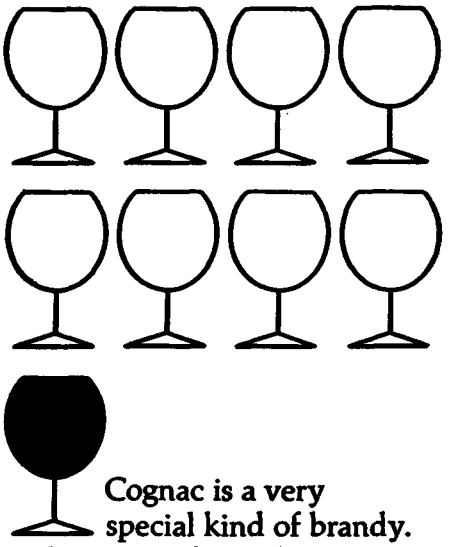

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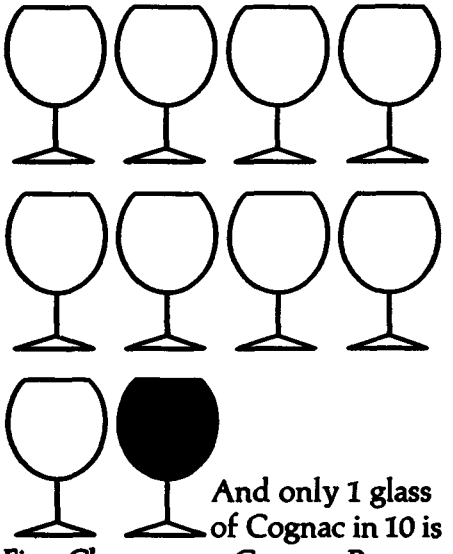

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just as "irresponsible" and comfortable as any other outsider? Could it be that he is what my Israeli friends like to call "a Manhattan Zionist" and that all his sincere espousal of Israel will have no practical consequences whatsoever either for Israel or for his own personal life and career? "Builders of great systems," remarked Kierkegaard, "are like men who erect a great castle and live in a small hut next door." My own lodging may be ramshackle. I pointed to its gaps and irrationalisms through my contributions to the Dialogue. But at least I inhabit my beliefs.

Mr. Alter criticizes my attempt to define the paradox of the existence of Israel. He offers nothing better. And I don't in any way regard that as a failing. I do not know a mind since Kafka's that could hold in just equilibrium, that could find a comprehensive metaphor or image for, the political, moral, mythical elements in the creation of the new state. *Pace* the Bismarckian rhetoric of Herzl—how many who speak glibly of the Zionist background have, in fact, bothered to read the *Judenstaat*? —Israel is a political invention with justifications as deeply rooted in myths, half-truths, and naked necessity as they are in either normal human justice or international law. I know of no honest way of expressing this except by observing ambiguity or duality, as the Talmud so often does. We cannot hope to grasp the moral dilemmas posed, to thinking Israelis themselves, by the existence of their nation-state, by the violent expulsion of many who lived there before and, temporarily, with them, if we do not admit an intellectually unresolved conflict between *Realpolitik* and a religious, messianic, mythological construct. That the world map would be a lunatic jumble if other ethnic communities had returned to locations they occupied two thousand years ago, that the very piece of ground on which I spoke in Israel had, not long before, been the home of human beings who had long lived there and who were now in abject refugee camps not many miles away—these are *facts*. They can be morally situated only in a very complex framework of values, crucial among them the "transcendental" and symbolic values which Mr. Alter acribes to "quasi-theological rhetoric."

But, no doubt, our difference lies deeper.

When Lamartine said, "*La vérité, c'est mon pays,*" he was proclaiming an ultra-nationalist act of faith, "my country right or wrong." If Mr. Alter has bothered to read me closely, he must know that I am saying precisely the opposite. I regard *no* nation-state as worth entrusting one's conscience to, I regard no citizenship as coming before individual conscience or as deserving more than a provisional, constantly re-examined moral loyalty. "Homeland of truth" is simply an image or metaphor to say that a human being is most at home inside his own skin, that he is most human and himself when he acts according to what he regards as vital truths. Whoever does act thus—and we are usually able to do little more than *try* and try once more after obvious failure—need not feel homeless or in exile. It is the armed tribal or national community, pursuing policies we feel to be mendacious or murderous, that makes us homeless from and within ourselves. No thinking American need have this explained to him in these Vietnam years.

Through ill fortune and good fortune, the Jews of the Diaspora were saved from the corruptions and lies of national and military power. The cost of this dialectical paradox was enormous—the near-total destruction of European Jewry. I am, I think, in no need of being reminded of that. But the gains were very great also. No Jew, in two millennia, had to deny that he was torturing prisoners. None had to walk armed amid the hatred of an occupied town, blowing up houses, holding hostages. Innocent of power, Judaism developed its genius for truth, its ability to survive among many languages and cultures, its refusal to trust facile national ideologies. Jews were compelled to be themselves and to be creative wanderers among men. Of this enforced condition came their formidable contribution to the whole genius of modern science, of modern feeling. In Marx, in Freud, in Einstein, in von Neumann, in Wittgenstein, in Roman Jakobson, in Lévi-Strauss —in literally thousands of Jewish exiles, there have taken place revolutions of spirit so great that our inner lives, and those of Western culture, would scarcely be recognizable without them. Strike a Jew and you have struck at a quintessence of man, of *das Menschliche*, said Kafka. Be a Jew and you are

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man on the very difficult way to a new and more vulnerable humanity, say the existentialists.

The relationship of Israel to this vision and to its creative tasks seems to me unclear. I agree with Mr. Alter that the behavior of Israeli troops and police is, in most cases, exemplary. I find it a grim setback that Jews must argue in such terms, that Jews have made others homeless and destitute (what responsibility had the Arabs for the Holocaust?). Zionism is a brand of nationalism with a very strong mystique of its own. I cannot accept nationalism and the armed nation-state as long-term solutions to the urgent problem of human coexistence on an overcrowded globe. I cannot share Mr. Alter's sanguine view that any nation-state can stay immune from the lies and cruelties that come of regimented existence amid bitter enemies. Anyone visiting Israel becomes more painfully aware with each visit of the pressures which the all-embracing job of armed survival are putting on intellectual and moral life, on the integrity of argument and feeling. If my friend Uriel Simon really believes that "Gentiles reject moralism when it comes from a man without an army," he is expounding a vulgar simplification. But let that pass. What matters is that I do not want to arrive at such a desolate position, and that Judaism is too proud, too singular a moral force to have to accept such criteria. Almost always it is the man *with* an army whose moralism is to be rejected.

Mr. Alter objects to arguing in religious, metaphysical terms. This is strange. Jews, from the prophets to Trotsky, have insisted that such terms are wholly relevant to practical and political life. In any case, I know of no other way of expressing the difference in our views. And even if I choose every word as carefully as I know how, I fear I will be misread.

I have said often that the defeat of Israel would be a great disaster, a human tragedy which would affect the life of every Jew wherever he might be, however alien he might feel to the ideals of Zionism. But it could well be an even worse disaster if Israel grew into no more than a small fortified enclave among wretched and implacable enemies. The scattering of two million Jews, their wandering again among nations would be a hideous thing. But it would not, I believe, ultimately endanger the survival of Judaism as a vision of human conduct. That survival is the central mystery of our being as Jews. Without it the somber singularity of our history would make little sense. There is that in Zionism and the nation-state which does threaten the transcendental ethical presence of "Israel" within the Jewish conscience. That this should be so is a *scandal*—in the exact religious sense of the term. The truth and the unbroken genius of Judaism are alive in many far places: among the young Jews who have protested the invasion of Czechoslovakia on Red Square itself, and who are now in labor camps; among the leaders of conscience so prominent in current American life; among the wanderers who put scholarship, moral argument, the transmission of values before any piece of ground.

It is not the "wandering internationalist" who "protects himself from the perception of his condition." How could he? The ironies of that condition, the hostilities that may spring at any time from a Gentile environment, face him and his children all day long. It is the armed nationalist who blinds himself to reality, who sets one language or locale above all others, who would exorcise two thousand years of history in the name of expedient myth.

As I write, the world news is filled with reports of a napalm and delayed-action bombing of a civilian factory by the Israeli air force. Within hours of the event, the government of Israel began putting out the kind of meaningless jargon about "a possible technical error" which defense ministries the world over have always put out. Nothing in Mr. Alter's "Zionism for the 70's" addresses itself to this tragic situation in any adequate moral, philosophic, or religious terms. Nothing in his article reaches deep enough or even tries to envision the spiral of hatred in which Israel is enmeshed —Israel, whose very existence is related in many and intricate ways, whatever chauvinistic bravado may say, to world opinion and to what little hope there is of a world conscience. A formula in Ezekiel is relevant: God says of and to Israel, I "will be jealous for My holy name." So must every Jew be, whatever the discomforts of his position. He must remain free, if at all possible, to judge in conscience and to suffer when murderousness

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is done in his name. To stay "unhoused" is one way of attempting to keep truth with the moral essence of Judaism or, at least with a major part of its historical genius. On reflection, Mr. Alter may see that it is not the easiest way.

GEORGE STEINER

Cambridge, England

MR. ALTER writes:

Let me first deal very briefly with those of the issues raised by George Steiner that seem to me more or less extraneous. I am puzzled by the imputation that my position is in any way to be associated with "those who identify sloppy writing and colloquialism with moral honesty." Surely nothing I said in my essay could be interpreted to mean that, and I may at least hope that my own prose would not invite such an inference. I was quite serious when I described George Steiner's essay as "eloquent," but especially those of us who care about good style may be troubled by a vocabulary that at times tends to overvalue or melodramatize the facts it is meant to describe. In precisely this connection, Mr. Steiner's apparent acceptance of Abba Eban as an exemplary stylist makes one wonder a little.

I would not dispute with George Steiner his predilection for confessional writing, as I did not dispute in my article his right to choose his own commitments, but the confessional mode hardly seems to me the most appropriate one in which to discuss political and historical questions, and I remain unconvinced that in order to establish credentials to speak out on these issues I need to offer public explanation of my present residence (three thousand miles west of Manhattan), my future plans, or my hopes for my children. In any case, my essay certainly does not harbor "the naive implication that one must be personally on the spot or physically involved in order to feel anguish and to articulate opinion"—if it did, I myself could not have presumed to write at all. What I was calling for was a concrete, complex imagination by outsiders of what is involved in the Israelis' moral and historical predicament, and this, I am afraid, Mr. Steiner exhibits only intermittently.

As for Lamartine's slogan, I thought I had made it amply clear —"Lamartine in his fervid French nationalism"—that its meaning was the opposite of Mr. Steiner's, but it struck me as ironically amusing and perhaps even instructive that an ideological nationalist and an ideological universalist should arrive at formulations that were verbally identical, though of course semantically antithetical. I do not, however, want to toy with quotations because Mr. Steiner at this point in his response raises a very serious and central issue. Surely all reasonable men would agree with him that, in the sense he defines it, the "homeland of truth" must be everyone's first homeland, that without such a commitment we will never have a world that can be called human, and perhaps we will have no world at all. What I would deny is his implication that there is a *necessary contradiction* between commitment to a terrestrial homeland and to the higher homeland of truth. If Mr. Steiner had a more intimate knowledge of the intellectual and cultural life of Israel, he might perhaps reconsider this implication. Israelis at their best—for he insists on taking Diaspora Jews only at their best—have evinced a devotion to "scholarship, moral argument, the transmission of values," which is in no way less than that of their counterparts in the Diaspora, and is in no way diminished by their political connection with "a piece of ground." It is symptomatic in this regard that at the Rehovot conference George Steiner should have made the suggestion, "from without," that a Jewishly appropriate project for the Israelis to undertake would be to found a center for Islamic studies in Jerusalem—apparently in complete ignorance of the fact that the Hebrew University in Jerusalem has long been one of the world's great centers for the study of Islamic history and institutions, Arabic language and literature.

Nationalism for Mr. Steiner can only be ideological and hence it must be impelled by myth: Israel moves in his vision from "a very strong mystique" to "an expedient myth." But the central argument of my essay was precisely that what has occurred in most Israeli circles is a critical disengagement from the old potent Zionist myths, the gaining of a new direct vision of the ambiguous facts of nationhood unmediated by ideology. This disengagement, which can be abundantly documented, makes understandable the extreme sharpness with which Israeli govern-

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ment policy is repeatedly criticized from various viewpoints in the Hebrew press and in other public forums in Israel. Mr. Steiner, however, imagining that to be a loyal citizen of a nation-state necessarily involves "entrusting one's conscience" to it, seems to assume an identity of attitudes between individual Israelis and the (ironically named) National Unity government; and since, in the most deplorable of rhetorical stratagems, he more than once links that government's policies analogically with those of the United States in Vietnam, he emerges with an image of Israel that is both uninformed and seriously misleading.

Now I have already made it plain that I am uncomfortable about speaking of the "mystery" of Jewish existence, while it is clear that George Steiner is not. Perhaps this is undebatable because it is a matter of faith, though some suspicion of secularized faiths seems warranted by recent historical experience. The view of Jewish history, however, that Mr. Steiner uses to support his faith is so acutely foreshortened that it is simply absurd. His "Jewish" pantheon includes Marx, Freud, Einstein, Wittgenstein, Lévi-Strauss, but would appear to have little room for the giants of Jewish culture—Akiba, Saadia Gaon, Judah Halevi, Maimonides, Rashi, the Baal Shem Tov, Bialik—who worked within a cohesive Jewish community, with a strong sense of national identity as Jews, indeed, many of them with an active attachment to the messianic restoration of Jewish national autonomy. Mr. Steiner thus manages to ignore the very two-thousand-year span of Jewish history that a now superannuated variety of Zionism, as he correctly notes, once "exorcised" with a myth. The flat assertion, moreover, that "innocent of power, Judaism developed its genius for truth," is plainly contradicted by historical fact, unless one chooses to exclude all of biblical legislation and prophecy together with biblical wisdom literature and the early formative period of rabbinic tradition from Judaism's "genius for truth." This is an even clearer example than the one I quoted in my article of a purely ideological statement about history. But a writer who can slide with such breathtaking ease "from the prophets to Trotsky" will have no difficulty in making a Daniel Cohn-Bendit the true heir of the prophets, or in disregarding any serious Jewish culture between the Bible and the birth of Marx.

Mr. Steiner is unhappy about my objection to his use of theological language, but his own peroration illustrates all too clearly the merely rhetorical stance assumed by those who quote the Bible promiscuously without either a belief in its divine authority or any great knowledge of its particular meanings. The phrase Mr. Steiner cites is in fact part of a prophecy of national restoration, and God's being "jealous for [His] holy name" means His active concern for the position of His people among the nations. Scrutiny of the text, I fear, even suggests that God's "jealousy" implies the defeat of the hitherto triumphant enemies of Israel. We are, of course, not concerned here with exegesis, but let me conclude by quoting the verse in context (Ezekiel 39:23-27) to illustrate the dangers of using a historical tradition loosely, or arbitrarily, as the prop for an ideology:

> And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into exile because of their iniquity, for trespassing against Me, so that I hid My presence from them and gave them over to their enemies, that they should all fall by the sword. According to their defilement and their sins have I dealt with them, hiding My presence from them. Therefore, thus says the Lord God: now I will return the captivity of Jacob and be compassionate to the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for My holy name. They have borne their disgrace and all their trespasses against Me when they dwelled secure on their land with none to make them afraid. When I bring them back from among the peoples and gather them in from the lands of their enemies, I will be made holy through them in the eyes of many nations.

The Quotable Truman

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the October 1969 issue of COMMENTARY ["Controversy"] I wrote that several quotations from D. F. Fleming and James Warburg were "accurate and perceptive" renditions of remarks by Truman in 1947. Arthur Schlesinger, in a letter [December 1969], took issue with this statement, claiming that

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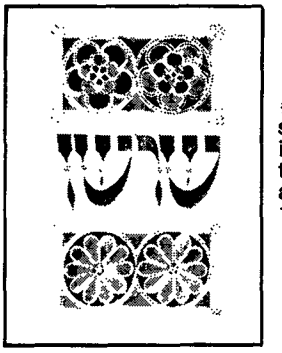

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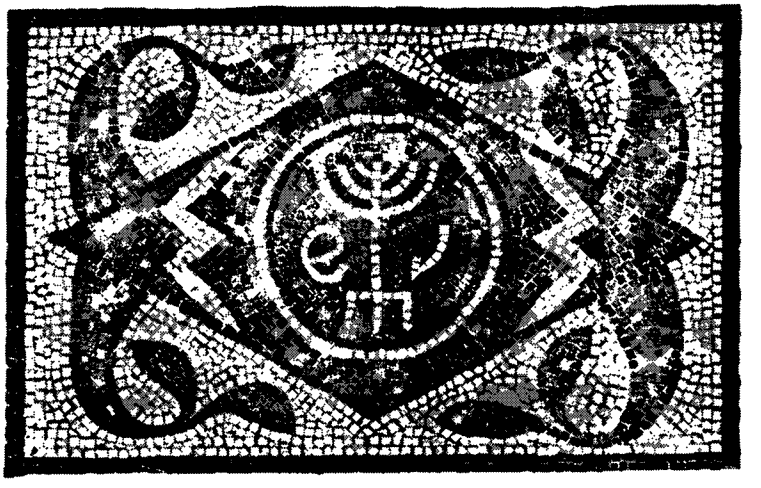

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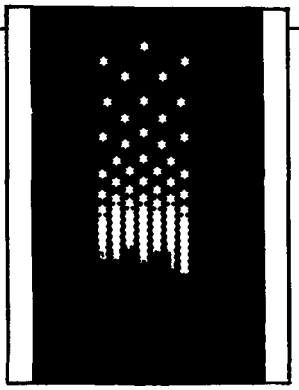

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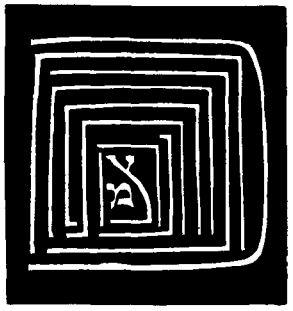

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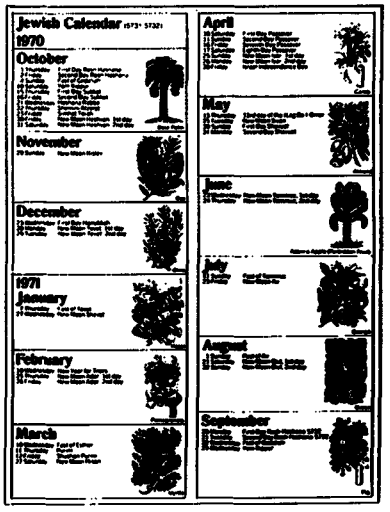

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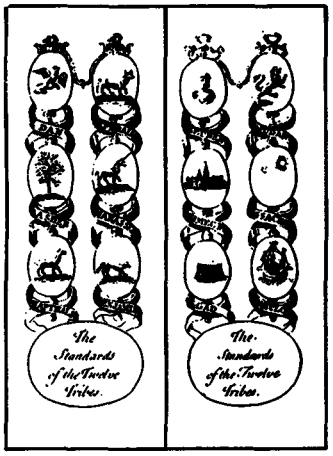

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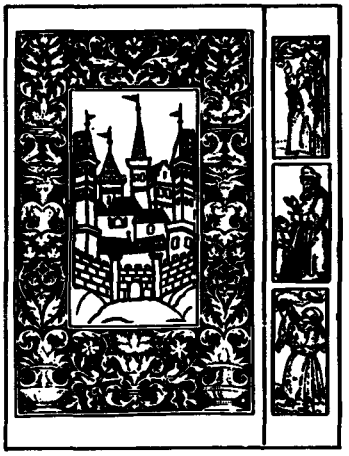

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Truman's speech was merely a plea to American businessmen, and not, as Warburg wrote at the time, an "unequivocal challenge" to nations turning toward government economic controls and an announcement that "we, the economic giant, are going to use our power to set a world pattern of free-enterprise capitalism," which is the best system and must become the world system if it is to survive in America. In a response [February] I showed in some detail that the comments by Fleming and Warburg were indeed accurate and perceptive, and I also noted a series of false statements and misrepresentations in Schlesinger's several discussions of this and related matters.

In his letter [March], Schlesinger says that he found this "long and boring." Therefore, he simply reiterates his interpretation of Truman's remarks, shown to be inaccurate in this analysis, with its tiresome concentration on fact and correct inference. Furthermore, he makes no reference to the fabrications and mistakes that were pointed out—not for him the acknowledgment and correction of error. Rather, he tries to evade the issue by claiming that in responding to my article of October he was not referring to that article (which I showed to be quite accurate) but rather to a statement about Truman's speech in my *American Power and the New Mandarins*. His claim is false, but no matter—let us assume that it is true. It is easy to show that the dull analysis in my February letter, as it stands, also refutes Schlesinger's new claim.

The statement in my book is that American policy has been "dominated by the principles that were crudely outlined by President Truman," namely, in the remarks paraphrased by Fleming and Warburg in the quotations that I then cited; in particular, this policy has been dominated by the principle that the whole world should adopt the American system which can survive here only if it becomes a world system. Schlesinger objects that this is a misrepresentation of Truman's speech. That is, he denies my statement that Truman's speech crudely outlined the principles expressed in these paraphrases (he puts it differently, pretending that I had offered Truman's speech as *proof* that we were then planning to use force to impose our ideology and approved forms of social organization on the world; of course, no speech could "prove" such a thesis, and I said nothing of the sort). But, as is shown in detail in my letter of February, the comments by Fleming and Warburg were accurate and perceptive renditions of Truman's remarks. It follows immediately that the analysis in my February letter, to which Schlesinger offers no reply, also refutes his present claim. The matter is elementary. I suspect that Schlesinger can make it out if he really puts his mind to it.

One might object to the cited statement in my book on different grounds: that American policy has not been dominated by these principles. Such an objection would also be incorrect, in my opinion, but since Schlesinger does not raise this objection, I will not pursue the matter. By simple logic, these are the only objections that can be raised to my statement that American policy has been dominated by the principles outlined by Truman, and expressed, clearly and concisely, in the accurate paraphrases that I quoted.

Next, Schlesinger claims that he could not find, in the place to which I referred, a statement as to my views concerning multilateralism, bilateralism, autarky. But what I wrote was that he would find there (and in many proposals of UNCTAD) an indication of what I would have preferred to Truman's proposals (specifically, Truman's opposition to what he calls "regimentation"). And that he will. But I repeat that although I have no objection to discussing these questions, I will not do so in the context set by Schlesinger's mendacity. In responding, I restrict myself to his claims regarding what I have written.

Next, Schlesinger asserts that statement (E) in my February letter misquotes Truman. Since he does not explain further, let me enlighten the reader. Truman wrote: "Freedom of worship—freedom of speech—freedom of enterprise. It must be true that the first two of these freedoms are related to the third." In (E) I mistakenly added the word "and" before "freedom of enterprise." This example indicates nicely the level of Schlesinger's criticisms, now that his efforts to deal with substantive issues have collapsed.

Schlesinger's next point is, if anything, even more silly. In my February letter I discussed his claim that a certain footnote of mine "makes evident" my beliefs about Roosevelt's foreign policy. But, he objects, this misstates his point, which was that the footnote in question "makes evident" that my premises "require" me to have these beliefs. Comment would be superfluous. Of course, the real point (which he fails to mention) is that the footnote exposes a series of fabricated quotations, errors of fact, and misrepresentations by Arthur Schlesinger, and contains nothing that remotely supports his claims as to what I believe (or am required to believe).

Finally, Schlesinger objects to my comment on his elaborate pretense that he was unable to find certain quotations in the source to which I gave a precise page reference. He repeats his claim that one quotation is not there and may have been invented. The quotation in question appears on the page to which I originally referred, but I slightly mistranscribed the wording, as I explained in October. Thus Schlesinger still persists in the pretense to which I alluded.

I want to reiterate that Schlesinger has made one correct observation. Several quotations that I attributed to Truman were paraphrases of his remarks by Warburg and Fleming, and the wording I gave was slightly garbled, as can be seen by checking the page reference to Fleming's *Cold War and Its Origins* that I gave in my book (p. 293) when first quoting these remarks (it was this reference that enabled Schlesinger to "trace the quotes to Fleming and Warburg"—a fact that he neglects to mention in his March letter). Repeatedly, Schlesinger has strayed from this correct and proper criticism and has attempted to deal with substantive questions of fact and interpretation. The results have been pathetic, and on each occasion he has beaten a hasty retreat to my original error, which I have now explained in half a dozen places and which has long been corrected in later printings, along with a few other errors that I have discovered.

This exhausts the points that Schlesinger raises in his latest effort. I agree with him fully about one matter. These exposures of his fabrications, evasions, misrepresentations, and pettiness are, to be sure, long and boring. I would suggest a simple and obvious remedy.

NOAM CHOMSKY
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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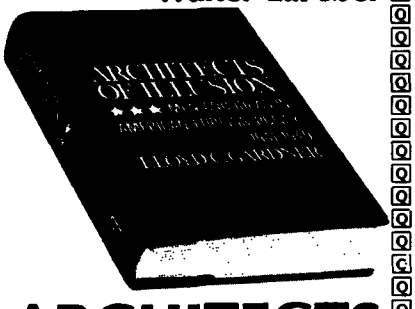

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On the Kennedys

To the Editor of Commentary:

It is the smallest token of love and respect for Robert Kennedy that I reply to Midge Decter's "Kennedyism" [January] without resort to personal sniping, cutting and condescending invective—gifts, at any rate, in which no one should hope to compete with her. I will attempt, however, to correct some of her more remarkable misstatements.

Miss Decter's first question is how "to establish [the Kennedys'] centrality to the period [of the 1960's] and at the same time leave them without responsibility for any of its nastiness?" That was not the question for Robert Kennedy who fully accepted his share of the responsibility for the war that Miss Decter correctly perceives is the center of our malaise. As he said, at the outset of his campaign and many times before and since, "I was involved with many of the early decisions on Vietnam, decisions which helped set us on our present path. It may be that the effort was doomed from the start; that it was never really possible to bring all of the people of South Vietnam under the rule of the successive governments we supported —governments . . . riddled with corruption, inefficiency, and greed. . . . If that is the case, as it well may be, then I am willing to bear my full share of the responsibility, before history and before my fellow-citizens. But past error is no excuse for its own perpetuation." At other times he recalled his own participation in foolish predictions of "victory." True, these confessions did not specifically mention President Kennedy; Robert Kennedy found it easier to speak of his own mistakes than those of a departed brother. Yet his honesty would lead him even there. He delayed publication of his own book on the Cuban missile crisis because he felt it needed a searching examination of the moral quality of his brother's greatest triumph: whether it was right to hold all the world hostage to nuclear war to achieve any gain, or forestall any loss, in a mere question of American prestige. (Perhaps, as Miss Decter would say, that is again a matter of intention only. If so, his forthright statements on his responsibility for the Vietnam war are good evidence that the intention would have been carried out.)

The article's second major assertion is "the truth . . . that both the Robert Kennedy of 1961-63 and the later Robert Kennedy of 1967 were unable, partly from a brash unconcern for the needs and experience of others, partly from what might have been a simple shortcoming in intelligence . . . to gauge the likely consequences of their policy." It would be remarkable indeed if so many millions of poor people . . . would have responded, as Miss Decter must admit they did, to someone with "a brash unconcern for the needs and experience of others." Similarly, it would be remarkable if some of the most complex and rigorous intelligences (I do not say intellectuals) in the nation could have found their vocation in the service of a man himself less than remarkably intelligent. In fact, of course, no one who observed Robert Kennedy with eyes not totally clouded by prejudice thought him anything but uncommonly sensitive to the feelings of others, and uncommonly intelligent besides.

Miss Decter saves the heart of her diatribe for last. Here we are told that "Kennedyism is the right of those properly endowed . . . to rule," and that the dominant urge of the New Politics is "the assertion of the right to be ruled by attractive men." This alliance "between the privileged and the *lumpen* . . . attained to a full embodiment in the Presidential primary campign of Robert F. Kennedy," says Miss Decter. In this campaign, we are asked to believe, "social welfare came to reside in the call for such things as a religious change of heart"—when throughout the campaign Robert Kennedy called for new and substantial government efforts to aid the poor of all colors; "or the application of special standards of conduct and competence to our colonial wards, the blacks"—when Robert Kennedy specifically stressed in black communities that he was saying to them just what he had said in Alabama, that the law must be observed; "or private philanthropy to the poor"—when Robert Kennedy had consistently said that philanthropy would not do, and introduced major legislation to put government and tax money to work. Miss Decter asserts that "men of the common stripe were called to return to their former happy status as villagers"—when Robert Kennedy was, so far as I am aware, the only politician to have offered, during his Senate

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term and during the campaign, a serious program for opening new educational opportunities to the by-passed factory and white-collar worker. . . . Miss Decter asserts that "The children of the upper middle class cried out in their universities for some institutionalized mark of their privileged caste." Perhaps so; but it was Robert Kennedy, alone of all the candidates and politicians, who repeatedly went to those universities and condemned the student deferment, because it favored fortunate students against both poor blacks and lower-middle-class whites who worked in factories and filling stations. Perhaps it was for some of these reasons that Robert Kennedy was able to carry overwhelmingly, not only black districts, but also those strongholds of the white working class . . . that after his death would give over 40 per cent of their votes to George C. Wallace.

It may be (such are the extremes of charity to which Miss Decter clearly does not aspire) that she is really attempting to describe, not Robert Kennedy himself, but the "Kennedyites" who followed him; to suggest that we are unworthy or unheeding of the idealism Robert Kennedy proclaimed. No doubt that is true. Some members of the former administration have perhaps been too ready to forget their own involvement in disastrous policies, while refusing to forgive the involvement of others. No doubt attacks on "the military-industrial complex" sound strange on the lips of those who, as Miss Decter correctly points out, were in 1961-63 involved with the largest peacetime increase in the Armed Forces budget in our history. But that is part of the frailty of human knowledge and judgment of which Robert Kennedy, at least, was always fully aware. . . .

And that is the tragedy of his loss, which Miss Decter seems to appreciate only in its personal sense. Robert Kennedy was central to the period of the 1960's because through his own admissions of error, in his own shifts of position, we could as a nation come to terms with our own. In his responsibility for the "nastiness," for the brutality of what we were doing to another country and the horror of what we permitted in our own, we could yet find the will and determination to change it; not to accept; to choose, as George Wald would say a year afterward, life, not death. For all their mistakes as leaders and as men, for all the failings and flaws of us, their followers, that is what the Kennedys represented to a generation of young people, here in America and around the world: that the world might be "intractable," but our effort could make a difference. Fortunately that conviction, which has survived the death of the men who bore it, will also survive the tired and cruel banalities with which their memories are now occasionally afflicted.

ADAM WALINSKY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Midge Decter criticizes President John F. Kennedy because of his failure to implement much of his program. She attributes his failure to the innate "powerlessness" of the Presidency and goes on to say that Kennedy's "bright new Washington was also a nightmare of bureaucratic prerogatives and traditions, entrenchments, and resistances, which fairly clanked at the least whisper of an unaccustomed motion." Strangely, Miss Decter does not refer to what, since 1938, has been a basic fact of American political life: except for a few brief periods when there was an overwhelming Democratic majority, Congress has been controlled by a coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats which has consistently and effectively blocked progress in many areas.

The closeness of the vote between Kennedy and Nixon in the 1960 Presidential race resulted in increased Republican strength in Congress. In the House, there were 172 Republican Representatives as against 260 Democrats. This gave the Republicans, with the aid of the Southern Democrats and a few conservative Democrats from other districts, an effective veto over most progressive legislation. A similar situation existed in the Senate.

The Johnson landslide victory over Goldwater in 1964 swept a number of Republicans out of the House, so that they numbered only 140 as against 294 Democrats. Furthermore, Johnson, by his methods, was able to influence some Southern Democrats—particularly those from Texas—to support measures which otherwise they would have joined the Re-

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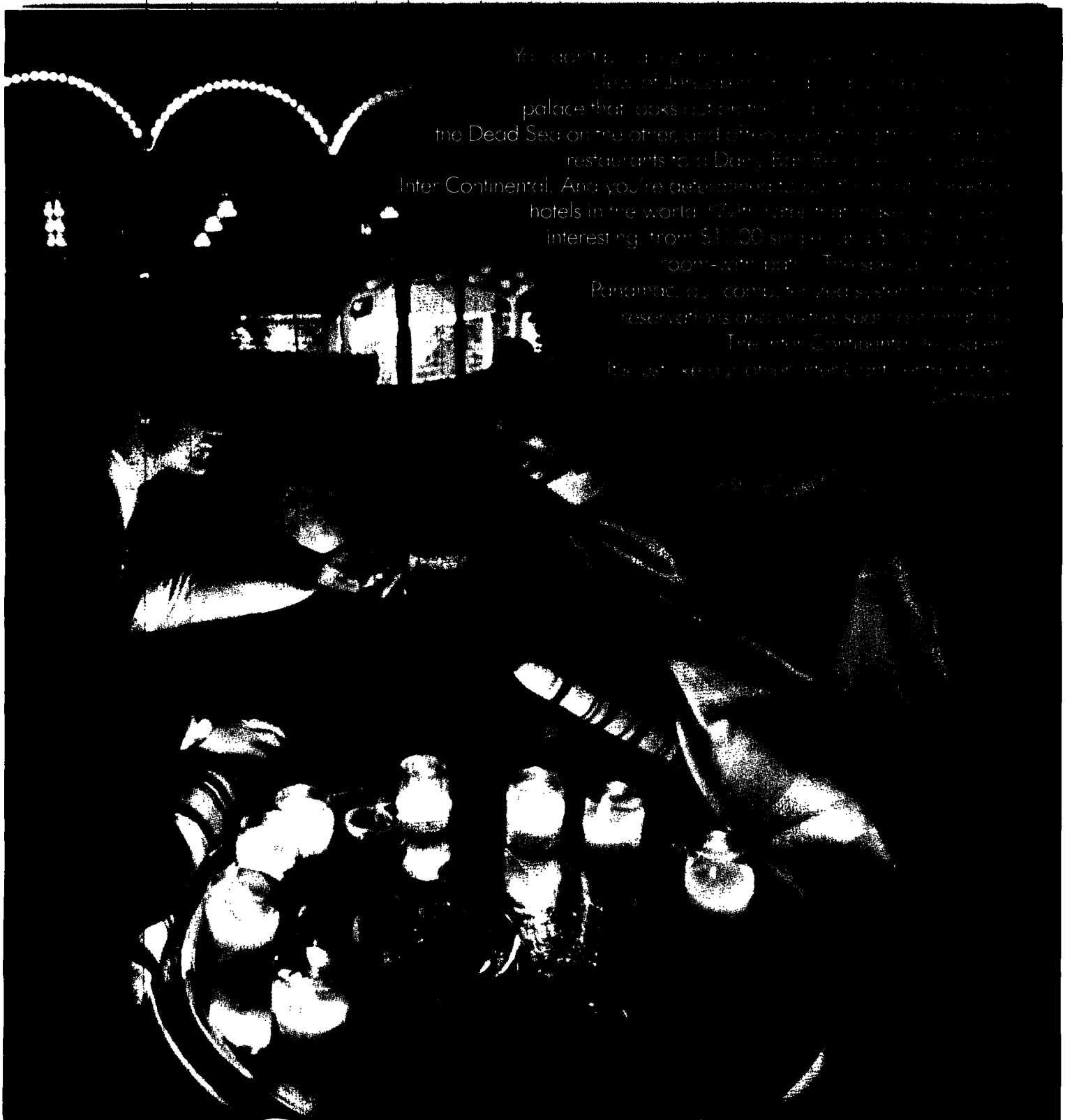

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publicans in opposing. This enabled Johnson—until his tragic involvement with Vietnam—to implement much of the Kennedy program.

With all deference to Miss Decter, I believe it is unfair to criticize John F. Kennedy for failing to accomplish more without referring to this important handicap.

IRVING M. ENGEL
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"Kennedyism" is an excellent critique of the New Politics—one of the best that has yet appeared. Despite the high moral tone of the movement, it has many inherently elitist and deceptively conservative features which Miss Decter identified with great perceptiveness.

I have one point of criticism, however. The phenomenon she describes as Kennedyism should, I think, more precisely be called McCarthyism or Lindsayism. . . . If Kennedyism, as Miss Decter defines it, is the "demand to be ruled in an attractive way" as well as an alliance between the elite and the *lumpen,* then certainly Eugene McCarthy and John Lindsay—not Robert Kennedy—represent the quintessence of Kennedyism.

After all, and for whatever reason, Robert Kennedy had considerable appeal among the white working class, something neither Lindsay nor McCarthy can claim. Mr. Lindsay finally discovered the white working class during his last campaign, but even then he couldn't overcome his attitude of *noblesse oblige*. . . .

If Mr. Lindsay has at least made an effort to overcome his class snobbism, Mr. McCarthy's intellectual snobbism remains intact. . . . Mr. McCarthy defies the New Politics movement only to the extent that he does not deign to align with the *lumpen.*

If by Kennedyism Miss Decter means the philosophy of the people who surrounded the Kennedys, then I would agree that Kennedyism and the New Politics are synonymous. But if by Kennedyism she means the philosophy of the Kennedys themselves or the constituency they were able to attract, then I think she should modify her definition somewhat. The New Politics movement, as it exists today, is guilty as accused by Miss Decter, but some of its elitist features might have been kept under control had Robert Kennedy lived. . . . If nothing else, he knew that it was politically wise to make a strong appeal to the white working class. . . .

CARL GERSHMAN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

By omitting almost all discussion of attitudes toward President Johnson during his administration, Midge Decter, it strikes me, avoids a context which makes some of what she wrote about Kennedyism more readily comprehensible.

The peculiar vehemence of the abuse President Johnson suffered (on more than one occasion I found myself having seriously to argue that he was not comparable to Hitler or Stalin) would not have been possible unless President Kennedy had not first obscured the office with his attractive style and his almost magical capacity to arouse aspirations which he had no means of fulfilling—aspirations whose depths are most readily fathomed in the *political or public sphere* by violent, often catastrophic civil or external wars. His manner, the atmosphere of his court—almost everything about Kennedy—implied that it was simply not enough to exercise the office of President with skill and good sense. Although perhaps more unpleasant, the insult and abuse Johnson was subjected to was, in its unreality, not essentially different from the flattery and spurious admiration Kennedy evoked.

In both instances the personality or the reputation of the personality (it is difficult to separate one from the other) obscured, even overwhelmed, the office. Because of this, it became increasingly difficult, at times impossible, to distinguish between Presidential action and Presidential gesture, between political reality and publicity, a polite word for domestic propaganda. That was the real meaning of the "credibility gap"—not that Presidents were lying, but that they were not acting like Presidents.

LEO RADITSA
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Midge Decter is obsessed solely by the rather trivial issue of style in an article that purports to be a serious analysis of American political behavior. Two points should be made about style in Kennedyism. First, it was not a question of intent. It was not that "the Kennedy administration wanted . . . to impose an image of itself on American society and American history: an image of itself as the rightful, by virtue of intrinsic superiority, American ruling class." This is an assertion, damning, unprovable and untrue. It is damning because of the implied vanity: the two Kennedy brothers, preening before their mirrors, admiring their own egregious stylishness and determining, *in hoc signo vinces,* to establish a dynasty. . . .

That the *reaction* to the Kennedys was something similar to what Miss Decter describes is unarguable, at least among a small segment of society. I agree, there is something vaguely preposterous, not to say appalling, about the degree of affection evoked by John F. Kennedy in so immodest and skeptical an individual as John Galbraith, for example. But that was fact. The man and his brother evoked that kind of sentiment; the sentiment was not part of a conniving scheme. . . .

The second point is the more important implied one in the final suggestion that with Kennedyism America has settled "into the spiritual condition of a great conservative imperial power." If it is true that one response to the Kennedys was a dynastic one, an instinctive feel for a natural royalty, it was only among a statistically insignificant number of people. As Miss Decter rightly points out, John F. Kennedy won by the smallest of margins. . . .

Given the implausibility of the major thesis of "Kennedyism," one wonders what was its purpose—merely to score a number of cheap points against the Kennedys' admirers and, by extension, the Kennedys themselves, that they should have been so loved?

GABRIELLA AZRAEL
Chicago, Illinois

Correction

The anthology edited by Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg, which Dan Jacobson reviewed in our April issue, was incorrectly titled *A Treasury of Yiddish Verse.* The correct title is *A Treasury of Yiddish Poetry.*—ED.

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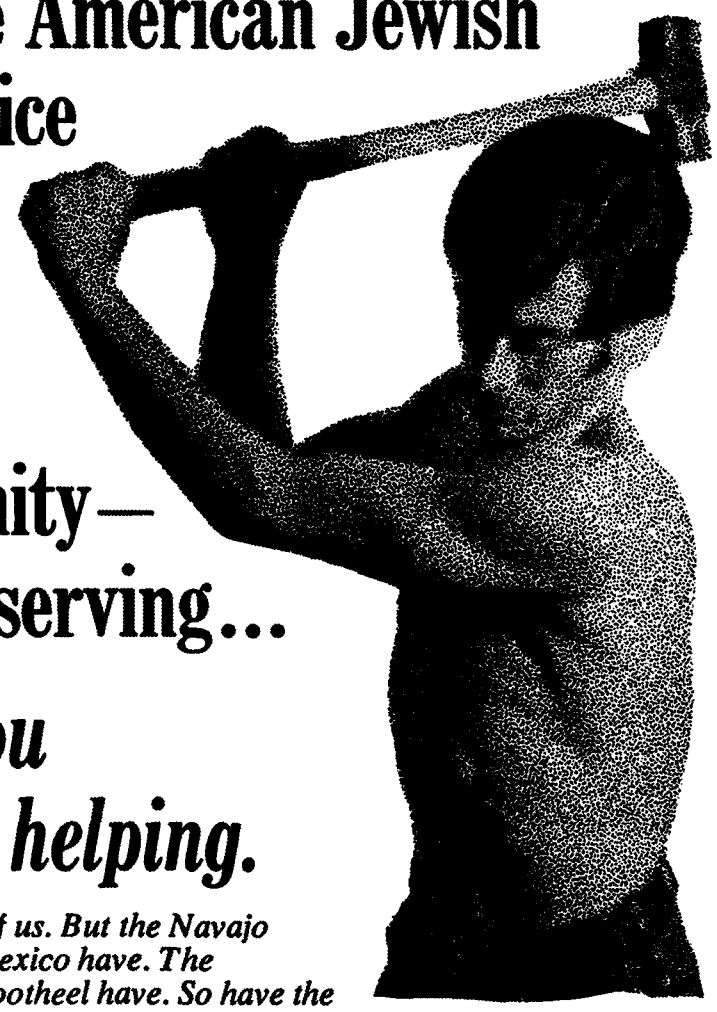

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Z: Politics on Film

Charles W. Brooks

In May 1963, Gregorios Lambrakis, professor of medicine at the University of Athens, opposition member of the Greek parliament, and leader of the Greek campaign for nuclear disarmament and against the deployment of American missiles in Greece, was conveniently run down by a motorcycle during a clash between his supporters and his opponents following a rally in Salonika. When Lambrakis died in the hospital a few days later, his followers claimed he had been the victim of a political murder. An investigation by a diligent and incorruptible examining magistrate bore out these charges. In 1966, the novelist Vassili Vassilikos wrote a thinly fictionalized account of Lambrakis's death, the subsequent inquiry, and the sensational trial at which Lambrakis's murderers were found guilty. The novel detailed how, with the connivance and cooperation of the police, an assassination had been made to look like an accident. Vassilikos called his book *Z*, meaning in Greek (*Zei*), "he lives." The next year, the title was both confirmed and denied when the colonels overthrew the legal government of Greece and seized the power they still hold.

Meanwhile, Vassilikos's novel had been read by Constantine (shortened to Costa, with a hyphen added, in his words, to "create confusion") Gavras, a young Greek expatriate living in Paris. Gavras, a graduate of the Sorbonne and the Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques, had just completed his first film, *The Sleeping Car Murder,* and was anxious to turn *Z* into his second. But United Artists, with whom Gavras had a contract, turned him down because, as he later told a New York *Times* interviewer, "they were afraid that if they made it, all United Artists pictures would be banned in Greece." The necessary $750,000 was finally raised in France. Another exile, Jorge Semprun, the Spanish author of Alain Resnais's *La Guerre est Finie,* collaborated with Gavras on the scenario and wrote the dialogue. Yves Montand, who had been in both Semprun's *La Guerre est Finie* and Gavras's *Sleeping Car Murder,* agreed to play Lambrakis at much less than his usual star scale. Mikis Theodorakis, the obvious choice, was unable to do the music because he is under house arrest in Greece, so some already existing compositions of his were arranged into a musical score. Raoul Coutard, the great New Wave photographer, shot the entire film in color in a Salonika-like Algiers, not, as Pauline Kael tentatively suggested, to add Algerian resonances to the Greek story, but because the Algerians came through with facilities and equipment. The resulting film won third prize at Cannes and, in effect, first prize in New York when it was voted Best Film of 1969 by the New York film critics, with Costa-Gavras named Best Director. It was also nominated for five Academy Awards.

The unanimous enthusiasm of the critics brought people out to line up in the bitter cold to see *Z,* and from all reports they are still there. Yet even had the reviews been less enthusiastic, I suspect quite a number of viewers will be disappointed when they finally get in to see the film. *Z* is in many ways admirable, but its chance for greatness or even real dramatic effectiveness was fatally compromised at the beginning by a crucial unresolved ambivalence on the part of those who made it.

Why Costa-Gavras made the film is clear: it is his protest and personal revolt against what has happened in his native land. As he told the New York *Times:* "If I were eighteen, I too would be in the street." But he is thirty-six, so he made *Z* instead.

The critics, though, paid scant attention to *Z*'s hortatory intentions: "*Z* is almost intolerably exciting," wrote Pauline Kael, whose tolerance for movie excitement is quite high, "a political thriller that builds up so much tension that you'll probably feel all knotted up by the time it's over." "Remember," she goes on to ask, "when the movie ads used to say 'it will knock you out of your seat'? Well, *Z* damn near does." And Vincent Canby, after apologizing for his reservations, ended his enthusiastic New York *Times* review by urging his readers not to seek from *Z* more than it offered: "A lot of people are going to become emotionally unstuck about *Z,* seeing it as a strong political statement, which is unnecessary to ennoble sheer entertainment."

As it happened, the person who became most emotionally unstuck about *Z* was its director, who did in fact see the film as a strong political statement. "I never intended *Z* to be sheer entertainment," declared Costa-Gavras in the *Times.* "I always meant the film as a political act. And the proof that it succeeds is that everyone recognizes the situation as the one in Greece, even though Greece is never once mentioned."

This last sentence aside (would anyone want to argue that the ease with which Berzelius Windrip is recognized as Huey Long is proof that Sinclair Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here* succeeds, or that the proof of the success of *All the King's Men* is that everyone recognizes Huey Long in Willie Stark?), the director's assertion raises an interesting question. How can Costa-Gavras's insistence

Charles W. Brooks, *a new contributor, teaches film analysis at Harvard.*

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on the political priorities in *Z* be reconciled with the reviews which praised the film mainly because, to use Pauline Kael's phrase, it was like "riding a roller-coaster just for the thrills"?

What "thrillers" have in common is that they thrill, and it is rare that they do so by accident. Almost invariably the thrills are the result of a conscious and calculated structuring. Most of the methods employed were discovered long ago in Hollywood, and have been used and reused in films, and particularly in American films, ever since. And it is precisely these techniques—the devices and conventions of the Hollywood thriller—which the so-called "serious" filmmaker usually eschews. A thriller might almost be defined as the opposite of a serious film, since the first tries for the superficial reaction and wants only to arouse, while the second aims deeper in an attempt to stimulate. *Z* is practically a paradigmatic case study of what happens when the two are imperfectly combined. The essential ambiguity of *Z* is that it is too serious—in intention at least—to thrill, and tries too hard to thrill to be taken seriously. Costa-Gavras wanted *Z* to show the true history of the Lambrakis affair. But he tried to hedge by telling it like a detective story. The reason he did so goes a long way toward explaining *Z*'s serious structural weaknesses.

Basically, I think the director did not feel he could trust his audience. In exile, *engagé*, unable to return to his homeland, Costa-Gavras is forced to suffer the world's placid toleration of a military dictatorship in the birthplace of democracy. It must be hard to endure the anguish of seeing tourists continue to go to the Greek islands, not caring that similar islands nearby have been turned into concentration camps, and the daily frustration of watching the Western powers treat the colonels with equanimity, approval, and even respect. It is quite understandable, then, that Costa-Gavras would see his first task as overcoming the widespread indifference to the plight of his native land. These preoccupations dictated a somewhat oblique approach. First, he would arouse the audience against political oppression and official corruption in general; only afterward would he reveal that all these things actually existed in Greece. The viewers' still unstructured anger would then be given specific direction, and the audience would be enlisted in the fight against the colonels. "We did not give the name of the country," Costa-Gavras explained, because "when people think of Greece, they think of beautiful vacations in the sun, and they would have been distracted from the movie's purpose." But "at the end, with the military coup d'état and the long list of censored works, the audience recognizes that the country is Greece. And they realize that what we have been showing them throughout the entire film are real facts."

The only thing wrong is that all this is based on a misapprehension. Everyone recognizes from the very first frame that the unnamed country in question is Greece. The danger of distraction is not from thoughts of beautiful vacations in the Greek sun, but from being diverted from the factual content of the narrative by its fictional form.

"I SUPPOSE," Costa-Gavras allowed Vincent Canby, "there are certain people who just do not wish to believe that things are the way I have shown them in my film." But this is not the real reason for disbelief. A better reason might be that audiences have seen these things in too many other films to believe that when they occur in this film they are taken from real life. Watching *Z*, one understands why so many directors never go to movies. The device of having a car chase a man through a colonnade and down a street, for example, is blatantly borrowed from the Hollywood thriller, and is by this time not only a cinematic cliché, but a very hackneyed one. If such an incident really did occur, it should be shot in a straightforward fashion, with discretion and economy. The temptation of theatricality must at all costs be shunned, since the slightest suggestion of melodrama risks a huge credibility gap. Yet this sequence in *Z*—in which one of Lambrakis's supporters is almost killed—is played for all it is worth. Unable to resist a dazzling, virtuoso camera technique to heighten the suspense, Costa-Gavras films it more like a reconstruction of previous gangster-film scenes than a recreation of real-life events. Nor is the chase episode—one of the most "thrilling" in the movie—the lone example of Costa-Gavras's willingness throughout to set echoes of old Hollywood thrillers going in the minds of his viewers. What all such instances suggest is that Costa-Gavras (assuming we take his declarations of intention seriously) was trying to apply the methods of *North by Northwest* to making *The Battle of Algiers.*

In a sense, of course, it is hard to blame him. Partisan propagandistic films are rarely very good, and when they are it is generally in spite of their political purposes. Sometimes, as with the anti-Communist movies Hollywood produced in its early-50's rush to expiate for its long neglect of the Red Menace, such films fail because the off-screen menace proved to be minor compared with the on-screen one. When the menace is real—when a film's Manichean world view is a fair reflection of a Manichean world, as was the case with the anti-Nazi films of the 40's—the problem is more serious. But precisely because the Nazis were so totally evil, many of the movies made against them were devoid of drama. The heroes tended to be as unequivocally good as the Nazis were unequivocally bad, and even less interesting.

Several ways around this dilemma were developed by moviemakers of the 40's. One was to shift the dramatic center to something more interesting, as in *Casablanca*, where the question is not whether Victor Laszlo, the anti-fascist resistance leader, will escape, but whether Ingrid Bergman will go with him or stay with Humphrey Bogart. (Indeed, Victor is so dull that his wife's leaving Casablanca with him is presented not merely as her duty in the Fight Against Fascism, but as an Unhappy Ending, her martyrdom to the cause of freedom.) Another strategy was to employ a more traditionally entertaining medium in which to

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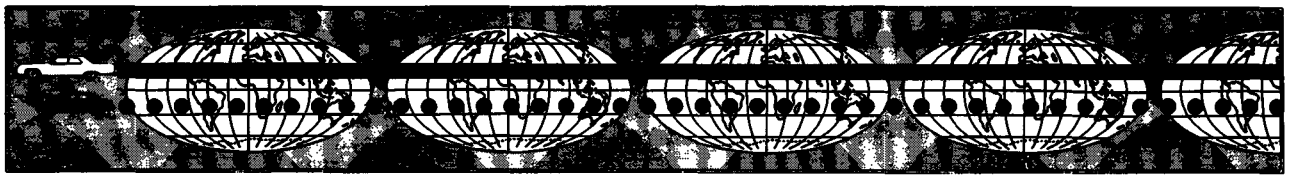

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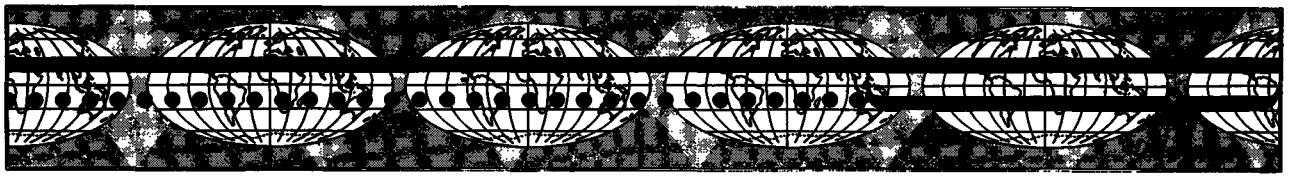

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convey the message. It was Ernst Lubitsch, a German Jew and an ex-comic actor, who saw that only its being taken hyperseriously saved Nazi theatricality from farce. By the masterstroke of having comedians play real Nazis and pseudo-tragedians play imitation ones, he made—in *To be or Not to Be*—what is undoubtedly the most devastating of all anti-Nazi films. Yet a third method was the use of allegory as, for example, in Westerns like the mainly anti-fascist *Ox-Bow Incident* of 1943, or the anti-McCarthy *High Noon* and *Johnny Guitar* of the early 50's, or a movie like the 1947 *Brute Force,* which used a prison-picture format for what was obviously an anti-fascist message.

Such inventiveness is not present in *Z,* for even the flimsiest of disguises might have proved too effective. Above all, Costa-Gavras did not want the public to be "distracted from the movie's purpose," an exposé of the Lambrakis murder. It is a false economy. What makes a narrative effective is not subtraction, but judicious addition. What lifts a good movie to greatness is attention to detail, either factual or fictional. Costa-Gavras may have had no scruples about using traditional cinematic clichés—both the standard kind and the currently fashionable kindergarten Resnais devices—to render "what actually happened"; but there is here a curious kind of puritanism—which expresses itself in a refusal to "make anything up"—about embellishing the actual facts of the Lambrakis case. There are, to be sure, a few half-hearted attempts to give the secondary characters distinguishing dimensions, but they prove catastrophic. One of the assassins is made into a homosexual, which I suppose is meant to be indicative or important—Lambrakis the Olympic hero, versus the homosexuals—but fails, for lack of development, to be either. A witness provides some unfunny comic relief by posing for publicity shots, and there is a heavy-handed exchange between the witness and his sister.

For the most part, however, Costa-Gavras avoids such risks and relies on sure-fire effects. The fascists are interchangeably faceless, since for Costa-Gavras and for most of his audience the fact that they are the ones in uniform is enough to indicate that they are the bad guys. As far as the good guys go, the casting of Yves Montand as Lambrakis instantly solves all characterization problems. Using Montand was a kind of dramatic shorthand, a ready-made prepackaged stimulus to the audience which saved the director from having to do the job himself. The same is true of Irene Papas, a magnificent woman who seems to walk through numerous films these days looking like the winner of Shirley Jackson's lottery.

It is one thing to put on a festival for Greek freedom; it is another to make a film. The actors are used here as if they were appearing at a benefit drive for Greek democracy. And we are supposed to understand instantly, and make the proper identifications, not from their roles in this film, but because we have seen them all before and know them automatically to be on the "right" side.

What in the end does *Z* wind up saying? Most of the critics—misled by the title perhaps, by the fashionably libertarian auspices under which it all takes place, or by the echoes of the Algerian struggle provided by the setting—have assumed that *Z* is a celebration of democracy—of the imperative for freedom residing in the people. Democracy may be thwarted temporarily, it seems to say, but in the end the impulse to liberty lives on and must triumph. Yet if one examines the movie closely, it doesn't really say this at all. The "people" act only once in this film, when a small group of students paint "Z" on the pavement before being easily dispersed by the police. For the most part, they are inert—either standing by passively as their political leaders are beaten by homosexual goons or, as in the comic sequence with the witness's sister, totally unaware and indifferent to what is going on around them.

The hero of *Z* is not the people but the examining magistrate, and the drama of *Z* lies in the magistrate's unrelenting pursuit of those behind the assassination of Lambrakis. This magistrate—played by Jean-Louis Trintignant—derives as much from the American film as from real life. His type goes back to the earliest days of the movies, when William S. Hart would singlehandedly take on the combined forces of evil, and emerge victorious. Like Gary Cooper in *High Noon,* Trintignant is the man who cannot be dissuaded from his duty, the man who stays when all the others run away. Perhaps unconsciously influenced by Hollywood films, Costa-Gavras's *Z* inadvertently shares their simplistic and even invidious naiveté, a naiveté which says that one fearless man is both necessary and sufficient to vanquish the forces of evil. Necessary because the people are sheeplike, inert, and useless; sufficient because the hero always does win in the end. The myth of the man alone is indefensible in what *Z* purports to be, and in what it has been widely taken as being.

Curiously, the "people" did actually play a political role in recent Greek history, but this role the movie altogether slights. Popular outrage over the Lambrakis affair, and popular reaction to the judicial inquiry, were in part responsible for the 1963 fall of the conservative and corrupt Karamanlis government. The Center-Left government headed by George Papandreou then came to power, only to be removed by King Constantine, who, after the colonels' coup, was himself forced into exile. The movie—as Andrew Sarris alone among critics has pointed out—actually presents a mendacious view of recent Greek history for its own ends. By telescoping the years between the Lambrakis affair and the colonels' takeover, *Z* makes it appear as though the present rulers of Greece killed Lambrakis and then seized power to cover their crime. This is simply not true. Though the makers of the film would doubtless argue that this is a mere legalistic point, the colonels in effect being on the same "team" as, and consequently the heirs of, those who perpetrated the murder, one is entitled to ask whether the spirit of freedom, of justice, or of love of the people is ever ultimately served by this kind of obfuscation.

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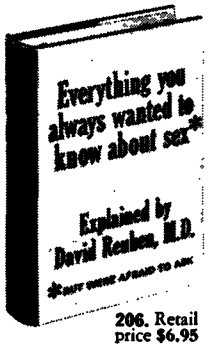

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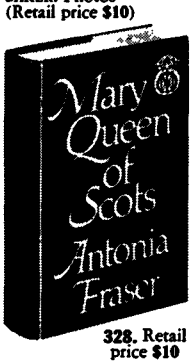

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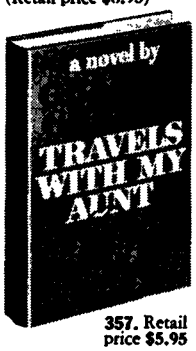

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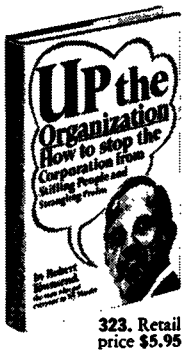

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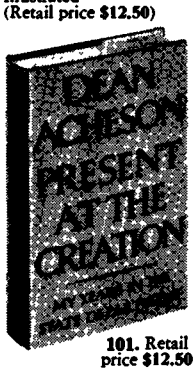

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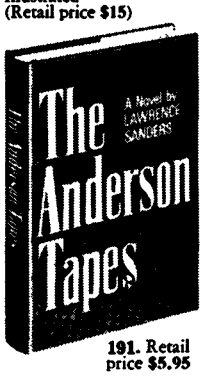

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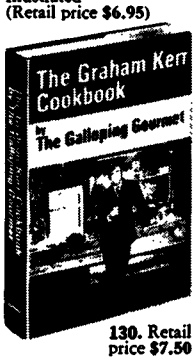

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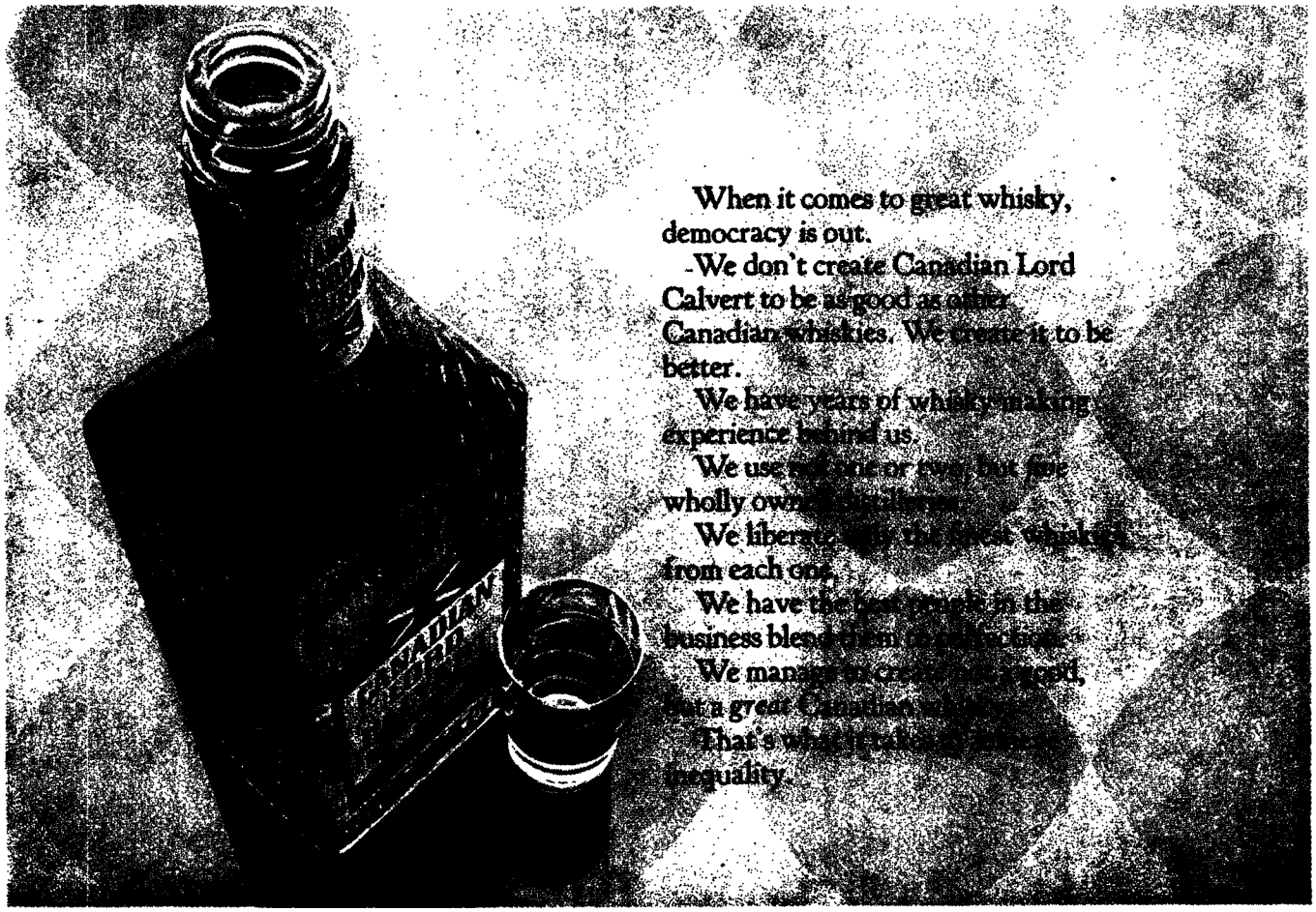
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Imperialism: II

George Lichtheim

I

THE FIRST PART of this essay, published in these pages last month, was mainly intended to sketch in the background relevant to the general concept of imperialism in the modern world. This approach has the advantage of freeing the discussion from the kind of fallacy that arises when a historical phenomenon is lifted out of its proper context. At the same time, by going back to earlier types of imperialism one can begin to establish a perspective that enables one to understand why hegemonial patterns have survived into the modern age. We are now obliged to make a detour through economic theorizing before returning to history. This procedure is once again imposed by the nature of the subject, but also by the fact that imperialism was perceived by its critics after 1900 primarily as an economic relationship. The debate thus came to turn very largely on considerations having to do with the peculiar mechanism of capitalist market economics. This is what imperialism has come to mean to the general public since the Russian Revolution dramatized the issue, but the theoretical discussion had started some twenty years earlier. Before turning to this important and complex debate, it will be useful to eliminate a misconception current among people who have come to associate the topic with the conflict between the Third World and the industrial superpowers. Hence the notion that capitalism—or Western capitalism plus Soviet state-socialism—relates to the underdeveloped world in a manner similar to the classical colonialism of the 19th century.

In its crude form this thesis is plainly untenable. It can be dealt with by asking a simple question: what *economic* damage has the "loss of China" done to American capitalism since 1950, or to Soviet state-socialism since 1960? Plainly none at all. It has rather freed these two super-powers of the tiresome obligation to provide investment funds for China, thus throwing an additional burden on the Chinese people. To this one may, if one is so minded, add the grisly query: what difference would it make to Western Europe and North America if the entire population of the Indian sub-continent were wiped out by famine, pestilence, or some other catastrophe? The answer presumably is that the British would then have to go without tea. What other economic consequences such an appalling human disaster would have on Western living standards, is not easy to discover.

There exists, however, a more sophisticated form of the argument which does not make the mistake of treating India and China as urgently-needed sources of raw materials and foodstuffs or as markets for Western or Soviet exports. The argument in this form recognizes the growing irrelevance of the Third World from the standpoint of the fully industrialized countries. It builds its projections upon the dialectic of underdevelopment, neo-colonial exploitation, increasing antagonism between the rich and the poor, and consequent revolutionary movements in the impoverished lands of the Third World. This is the Maoist line of thought, although its chief exponents are currently to be found among Western sympathizers rather than among Chinese propagandists. It is a line which has to be taken seriously, if only because it has amalgamated with nationalism to become the official creed of China. The trouble is that not in-

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frequently it gets mixed up with arguments stressing the growing dependence of Western—notably American—industry upon imported minerals. There is no inherent contradiction in these notions, but we need to be clear just what we are talking about.

In its academic form the thesis relies upon comparisons with the mercantilist era. During that bygone age, colonial exploitation of the tropics helped to finance Western industrialization, and the new industries in turn unloaded their surplus commodity exports of consumer goods upon colonial territories owned or controlled by Britain, France, and other European powers. This was the essence of what in French literature came to be known as the *pacte colonial.* Its gradual elimination in France after 1860, following the British example, ushered in the liberal era, when similar results were obtained without the imposition of direct political controls. What is nowadays styled "neo-colonialism" represents a different relationship: contractual bargaining between advanced and backward countries whereby the former undertake to assist the industrialization of the latter, on the understanding that loans will be reimbursed and investment capital will not be confiscated. Since loans cannot in fact be repaid with interest, and since the profits of Western corporations are for the most part funneled back to the metropolis, the relationship remains unequal, although it may look reasonable on paper. Moreover, this form of modernization proceeds too slowly to catch up with the population explosion.

Taken in the abstract, there appears to be no reason why a major industrial country—whether capitalist or socialist—should not assume the temporary burden of helping to modernize backward (underdeveloped) areas. Likewise, a backward country may lift itself by its own bootstraps. This after all is what occurred in the case of Japan, and Japan is now a more important market for Western industrial exports than the rest of Asia combined. It is also, however, a competitor. Japan, for historical reasons, avoided the typical colonial relationship and by now has assumed the rank of a major industrial power. As such it provides outlets for Western exports whereas colonial profits are typically derived from extractive industries operating with cheap labor and producing oil or minerals to feed the industries of the advanced countries. Now why should the West—America above all—not assist other Asian or African countries to follow the Japanese road? Setting aside domestic barriers to modernization it would appear to be in the interest of all concerned to make the necessary funds available. This, after all, is the only way in which the productive forces of the Third World can be developed to the point where these countries become worthwhile partners in international exchange.

IF THE question is posed in this form, the more consistent ideologists of the Trotskyist or Maoist school (in practice the two are becoming difficult to distinguish, since the Maoists are theoretically incompetent and have to fall back on arguments worked out for them by Trotskyist writers) are reduced to the assertion that capitalism, by its nature, *cannot* promote the full industrialization of backward countries. The argument relies upon the Leninist identification of capitalism with imperialism. The latter by definition impedes the industrialization of backward countries, while relying upon cheap labor to obtain raw materials for the metropolis. A drive to industrialize the undeveloped areas, in the hope of extracting higher profits at a later date, would meet the requirements of economic rationality, but would be self-liquidating so far as imperialism was concerned. For the developed countries—capitalist or nominally socialist—would have to sacrifice some of their profits or some of their domestic consumption for the sake of the undeveloped. On socialist principles this is of course what they should be doing, but it can be argued that self-preservation alone is an adequate motive. After all, the widening gulf between the industrial centers and the Third World is potentially dangerous for all concerned. However, Maoist and Trotskyist thinking affirms that such a self-liquidation of imperialism is not going to occur because it is more profitable to maintain the present unequal relationship. At the same time, it is held that colonial resources are crucially important to the functioning of the Western economy, which would be strangled without access to these raw materials.[1*]

The argument suffers from trying to prove too much. If the undeveloped countries are becoming irrelevant to the highly industrialized powers, they cannot at the same time be essential to them. If they are relevant as sources of oil, bauxite, tin, chrome, nickel, manganese, and other raw materials, then they are likely to accumulate capital for their own industrialization: if necessary by expropriating foreign holdings located on their territories, but more probably by squeezing extra revenue out of them. In fact this is already happening in the oil-producing countries, and for the simplest reason: it does not pay a foreign government or corporation to quarrel with a local nationalist regime, at the risk of having its installations wrecked or confiscated. Thus in general the symbiotic relationship between such regimes and the West (or the USSR) does *not* profit only the stronger party.

Since the whole chain of reasoning starts from an argument developed by Lenin in 1916, we need not consider the theory of imperialism suggested by Rosa Luxemburg in 1913, but there is a link between Lenin and the analysis of finance capital

* All notes appear at the end of the article.

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and protectionism associated with the Austro-Marxist school. The latter found a critic in J. A. Schumpeter, but his explanation of the whole phenonemon embodied some notions first put forward by Rudolf Hilferding and other Marxists around 1910, and earlier by Karl Kautsky. This debate, which climaxed in 1914-18, was itself a sequel to the earlier quarrel between conservative protectionists and liberal imperialists in Britain, and is thus closely related to the discussion in Section V of the first part of this essay which appeared last month. On the Marxist side it ran its course between 1910 and 1930, little being added afterward to the theoretical core of the argument then worked out by the protagonists. Liberal critics of imperialism, as noted before, had already found a notable advocate in J. A. Hobson as early as 1902. The current American debate in part reproduces the earlier British controversy, but the notion of a fundamental "north-south" division separating the industrially-advanced countries—including the USSR—from the backward regions of the globe is new and has introduced a political line-up cutting across the East-West antagonism, sometimes described as the cold war.

Lastly, as a consequence of the Maoist retreat from Marxism-Leninism to populism, there has arisen the notion that the peasantry rather than the industrial proletariat is the class destined to make an end of imperialism: the latter term now encompassing all the industrially-advanced countries, and within the latter the working class along with the rest. This notion represents a complete break not only with Marxism, but with Leninist strategy as well, a circumstance that has not prevented some of its defenders from claiming the inheritance of Marx and Lenin, on the grounds that socialists must always side with the exploited, whether they be slaves, serfs, or peasant proprietors victimized by colonial relationships. Admirable in its resolute disregard of all but moral considerations, this doctrine seems closer in spirit to Tolstoy or Gandhi than to the theorists of modern Communism.

Some familiarity with the argument set out in Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916) may these days be taken for granted, but it is useful to remind ourselves wherein the chief innovation lay.[2] Hobson had in 1902 described British imperialism as an outcrop of protectionist and militarist tendencies; in other words, he regarded it as a reactionary movement, a reversion to mercantilism. "The economic root of Imperialism," he wrote, "is the desire of strong organized industrial and financial interests to secure and develop at the public expense and by the public force private markets for their surplus goods and their surplus capital. War, militarism, and a 'spirited foreign policy' are the necessary means to this end."[3] Kautsky's explanation of imperialism in 1914-15, albeit more complex and sophisticated, as befitted a Marxist, ran along similar lines, a circumstance stressed in Lenin's polemics against him. Hilferding, on the other hand, although politically associated with Kautsky, was acceptable to Lenin as a writer because in his 1910 work he had established a connection between imperialism and "finance capital," with special reference to the great investment banks. Lenin approvingly cited his remark, "Finance capital does not want liberty, it wants domination,"[4] and then went on to develop his own thesis that imperialism represented "the monopoly stage of capitalism." This formulation differed somewhat from Hilferding's conclusion, and even more from Kautsky's assessment which rested on the belief that imperialist rivalry among the leading powers was merely one possibility among others: there might be less dangerous and more profitable solutions, e.g., "the joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital in place of the mutual rivalries of national finance capitals. Such a new phase of capitalism is at any rate conceivable." The indignation this suggestion evoked in Lenin's breast[5] must strike the reader as puzzling unless he remembers that Kautsky was a pacifist, whereas Lenin was convinced that imperialism as a world system was fated to go down in a series of shattering wars and revolutions. On Kautsky's assumption—which was compatible with Hobson, and in all probability derived from him—"ultra-imperialism" as he termed it, might evolve into a stable, albeit retrogressive, system of exploitation, with intra-imperialist rivalries reduced to a minimum. This perspective struck Lenin as both philistine and implausible: wars among the imperialist powers would continue. The reason he gives is interesting:

> The question has only to be presented clearly for any other than a negative answer to be impossible. This is because the only conceivable basis under capitalism for the division of spheres of influence, interests, colonies, etc., is a calculation of the *strength* of those participating, their general economic, financial, military strength, etc. And the strength of these participants in the division does not change to an equal degree, for the *even* development of different undertakings, trusts, branches of industry, or countries is impossible under capitalism. Half a century ago Germany was a miserable, insignificant country, if her capital strength is compared with that of the Britain of that time; Japan compared with Russia in the same way. Is it "conceivable" that in ten or twenty years' time the relative strength of the imperialist powers will have remained *un*changed? It is out of the question.[6]

UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT was inherent in capitalism—especially in cartelized and trustified monopoly capitalism—and intra-imperialist wars would result from the con-

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tinuous shift in the balance of power. This conclusion, while important to Lenin, was only very loosely integrated into the general framework of his argument, which centered on the thesis that, as he put it, "in its economic essence imperialism is monopoly capitalism." The thesis—developed on the basis of Hilferding's work which traced the disappearance of free competition and laissez-faire—ran alongside another strand of thought suggested by the colonial partition of the globe in the last quarter of the 19th century. Both together constituted the "essence" of imperialism: a global system within which peaceful "re-divisions" were excluded because the various sectors of the capitalist world economy developed at different speeds, so that the balance of forces was constantly upset. The rival imperialisms could not come to terms permanently, not even for the purpose of jointly exploiting the rest of the globe. Lenin was writing in 1916 under the impact of the first Anglo-German war. One can only conjecture what he might have said of a world system organized around the United States, as the 19th-century system had centered on Britain. Even less easy is it to imagine his comments on the triangular relationship linking the United States, the USSR, and China: the latter two nominally socialist, yet to all appearances quite capable of waging a nuclear war for the sake of territory in Siberia. Still, Lenin, like everyone else, was aware that imperialism antedated capitalism:

> Colonial policy and imperialism existed before the latest stage of capitalism, and even before capitalism. Rome, founded on slavery, pursued a colonial policy and practiced imperialism. But "general" disquisitions on imperialism which ignore, or put [sic] into the background, the fundamental difference between socio-economic formations, inevitably turn into the most vapid banality or bragging, like the comparison: "Greater Rome and Greater Britain." Even the capitalist colonial policy of *previous* stages of capitalism is essentially different from the colonial policy of finance capital.[7]

This is hardly conclusive as an argument against the possibility of a world imperialist cartel. Furthermore, the fact that the most varied socio-economic formations had spawned the phenomenon of imperialism might have served as a caution that the disappearance of capitalism would not necessarily bring universal peace with it. However, in Lenin's perspective the global revolt against imperialist exploitation was an aspect of the socialist revolution. That accomplished and class domination abolished forever, what reason would the emancipated peoples have for waging war on each other? Nationalism? But this sentiment had historically arisen alongside bourgeois society and would give way to the internationalism of the working class. The 1917 preface to the new edition of the pamphlet, and even more so the 1920 preface to the French and German editions, were composed at a time when the Russian Revolution seemed to prefigure a global uprising. But the essential consistency of Lenin's argument does not depend upon considerations having to do with the ups and downs of the revolutionary wave. To his mind, the struggle for self-determination within the multi-national "empire" of the Habsburgs or the Romanovs was part and parcel of a universal combat against imperialism in all its forms. The 1914-18 war had bridged the gap between radical democracy and proletarian socialism, for both the old dynastic and the new capitalist "empires" were responsible for its outbreak. The opening passage of an article he composed in September-October 1914 pulled the strands of the argument together:

> The European war, which the governments and the bourgeois parties of all countries have been preparing for decades, has broken out. The growth of armaments, the extreme intensification of the struggle for markets in the latest—the imperialist—stage of capitalist development in the advanced countries, and the dynastic interests of the more backward East European monarchies were inevitably bound to bring about this war, and have done so. Seizure of territory and subjugation of other nations, the ruining of competing nations and the plunder of their wealth . . . these comprise the sole actual content, importance, and significance of the present war.[8]

In 1916 Lenin was polemicizing against Kautsky who—in an article composed shortly before the outbreak of war and published in his journal, the *Neue Zeit*, on September 11, 1914—had presented a highly orthodox interpretation of imperialism as a form of exploitation of backward agrarian countries by the capitalist powers. Kautsky's analysis, which owed much to Hilferding and something to Luxemburg, duly made the point that imperialism had succeeded free trade. He also noted the growing pressure upon Britain from the rise of protectionism, the imperialist reaction in England itself, and the growth of capital exports since 1870. All this was fully in tune with both liberal and Marxist thinking as it had developed since Hobson, as was Kautsky's stress upon the burden of militarism. Why then did Lenin object so violently to it? Largely because Kautsky, with his habitual optimism, had affirmed that imperialism was a retrograde phenomenon which did not really serve the interest of modern capitalism, if the system was administered rationally. Imperialism, by way of the arms race, interfered with capital accumulation and was thus a self-defeating operation. It was "digging its own grave." And yet capitalism might still be capable of further development: from warlike competition among the rival powers to a stage of "ultra-imperialism," "the translation of cartelization into foreign policy." This

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was a perfectly sensible prognosis, but Lenin would have none of it: imperialist wars would go on, and they would eventually wreck the system.

Four years later, in July 1920, the preface to the French and German editions of *Imperialism* shifts the emphasis by omitting the old dynastic empires:

> It is proved in the pamphlet that the war of 1914-18 was imperialist (that is, an annexationist, predatory, war of plunder) on the part of both sides; it was a war for the division of the world, for the partition and repartition of colonies and spheres of influence of finance capital, etc.[9]

The "more backward East European monarchies" have disappeared from sight. After all, Czarist Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the Hohenzollern monarchy were no more, and there was no need to remind the reader of their misdeeds. The argument focuses upon the specifically capitalist nature of modern imperialism:

> It is precisely irrefutable summarized data of this kind that I quoted in describing the *partition of the world* in 1876 and 1914 . . . and the division of the world's *railways* in 1890 and 1913. . . . Railways are a summation of the basic capitalist industries, coal, iron, and steel; a summation and the most striking index of the development of world trade and bourgeois-democratic civilization. How the railways are linked up with large-scale industry, with monopolies, syndicates, cartels, trusts, banks, and the financial oligarchy is shown in the preceding chapters of the book. The uneven distribution of the railways, their uneven development—sums up, as it were, modern monopolist capitalism on a world-wide scale. And this summary proves that imperialist wars are absolutely inevitable under *such* an economic system, *as long as* private property in the means of production exists.
>
> The building of railways seems to be a simple, natural, democratic, cultural, and civilizing enterprise. . . . But as a matter of fact the capitalist threads, which in thousands of different intercrossings bind these enterprises with private property in the means of production in general, have converted this railway construction into an instrument for oppressing *a thousand million* people [in the colonies and semi-colonies], that is more than half the population of the globe that inhabits the dependent countries, as well as the wage-slaves of capital in the "civilized" countries.[10]

Marx had predicted a new war between Germany and France (this time allied to Czarist Russia) from the day Bismarck demanded Alsace-Lorraine in 1870, and Engels looked forward with trepidation to a great European war in 1890 when it became clear that Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism were about to collide over the decaying body of the Turkish Empire.[11] This perspective guided the Second International since its foundation in 1889, and Lenin inherited it. But in 1920 he no longer needed it. The inevitability of war in the modern age could now be inferred from "uneven development" alone. No mention of Constantinople, or of the European power balance which underlay the pre-1914 alliances. The 1914-18 war had become "essentially" a conflict between Britain and Germany, and the wars of the future were going to be determined by similar rivalries. "Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the population of the world by a handful of 'advanced' countries. And this 'booty' is shared between two or three powerful world plunderers armed to the teeth (America, Great Britain, Japan), who are drawing the whole world into *their* war over the division of *their* booty."[12]

THE "parasitism and decay" of this imperialist capitalism expressed itself in two interconnected ways: a handful of "advanced" countries plundered the rest of the world, and they did so by way of capital exports. These investments yielded colossal profits and "out of such *superprofits* . . . it is *possible to bribe* the labor leaders and the upper stratum of the labor aristocracy. And that is just what the capitalists of the 'advanced' countries are doing."[13] Too bad the "labor aristocracy" turned out to be the core of the newly-formed Communist parties (as it had been the historic carrier of socialist ideas ever since the 1830's when socialism came into being). Lenin had found a formula which enabled him to integrate anti-colonialism within the general framework of his theorizing. He could not well foresee that forty years later these slogans would be taken up in Peking and turned against his own successors.

For by the 1960's the technological disparity between the USSR and China had become so blatant as to raise the question in the minds of China's rulers whether on Leninist principles the Soviet Union might not have to be regarded as an "imperialist" power. Support for this assessment could be found both in Lenin's earlier writings (when he was still concerned with Czarist annexations in Asia and elsewhere) and in *Imperialism*, where it was shown that the material base of imperialist domination lay in uneven economic growth and in the systematic exploitation of the undeveloped countries by the more advanced ones. As for the institution of public ownership in Russia after 1917, one could get around this difficulty by affirming that private capitalism had simply been replaced by state capitalism, the bourgeoisie by a privileged bureaucracy. But if this was the outcome of a proletarian revolution, then what guarantee was there that China would not suffer the same fate? At this point, Maoism discloses its essentially Rousseauist character: it

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replaces class analysis by social psychology. China is to be regenerated by an act of will, purified of "feudal remnants" (which it never possessed), purged of bourgeois sentiments still prevalent even among nominal Communists, and in general subjected to the rule of virtue. This kind of puritanism is a feature of every revolution, and Maoism reveals itself as an illusory experiment in self-improvement which repeats the tragicomedy of the Cromwellian and Robespierrist episodes at the peak of earlier upheavals belonging to the same general type. Its "proletarian" content is nil, and it is plain that its leaders have not the faintest inkling of what Marxism is about.

But although mired in primitive thought-forms (nationalism above all), the Chinese are still able to make use of that element in Leninism which connects it with the Marxist critique of imperialism: the indictment of monopoly capital as the instrument of global exploitation. If it is the case that the existence of a handful of advanced countries necessarily aggravates the underdevelopment of the remainder, then the cleavage between American capitalism and Soviet "socialism" does indeed become insignificant. Which is where we came in. But before going further into this matter, there is still something to be said about Lenin's theory of imperialism and its relevance to the age which terminated in 1945.

MARXISTS HAVE traditionally held that European overseas expansion since the 16th century was an aspect of capitalism, in the sense that it was both cause and consequence of the socio-economic transformation originally begun by the Italian city-states and culminating in the Industrial Revolution. Mercantilist policy, as we have seen, was thoroughly imperialist and the driving force behind it was the urge to amass national capital in competition with rival powers. All this took shape during the pioneering age of capitalism, when production was still carried on in small competitive units. In what sense, then, can imperialism be described as the "highest stage" of capitalism, when in point of fact it made its appearance during this early transitional phase? Lenin's answer to this question differs from Hobson's in that he regards modern imperialism not as an aberration, but as the norm of capitalist development in its final, monopolistic, stage. If this is accepted, it follows that the system is moribund. For if monopoly capitalism entails the forcible subjugation of the world by a handful of overdeveloped imperialist countries, then the national movement in the colonies and semi-colonies must in the long run be fatal to the prospect of further development along capitalist lines. "World revolution" is now concretized into the perspective spelled out in Lenin's veritable "testament": the article published in *Pravda* on March 4, 1923, a few days before he suffered the paralyzing stroke that laid him low:

> In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And during the past few years it is this majority that has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the complete victory of socialism is fully and absolutely assured.[14]

In a certain fundamental sense this was to become and remain the official Soviet perspective on world affairs until Stalin's death, exactly thirty years after the publication of Lenin's *Pravda* article. For whatever else he sacrificed, Stalin never made a real break with the Leninist belief in an inevitable East-West confrontation pitting Russia and Asia against the counterrevolutionary and imperialist West. This conclusion followed quite logically from Lenin's concept of imperialism, and it was this part of his thinking which—via the Stalinist heritage—eventually entered into the theory and practice of Maoism. By now of course it no longer concords with the political line-up, the USSR having become, in Maoist terminology, an "imperialist" power in league with the United States.[15] Is this simply a matter of shifting political alignments due to incalculable political and personal factors, or does it point up a fault in the original theoretical construction?

If the expansion of empires historically antedates the capitalist era—let alone the phase of fully-developed monopolistic capitalism after 1900—then there seems to be no good reason why imperialism (in the sense of territorial conquest and the acquisition of "empty space") should not endure into the socialist age. There may be no urgent economic drive behind it, but a bureaucracy (or any other political elite in control of a major power) may feel impelled to extend its own control for political and military reasons alone. In the 1930's the Stalinist regime chose to industrialize at breakneck speed (and to liquidate the peasantry as a class, while holding working-class living standards down to the absolute minimum through the institution of terrorism and forced labor) for what was primarily a political reason: the conviction that within measurable time the USSR would have to confront a major military challenge. As it turned out, this forecast proved correct, even though it may also have been self-fulfilling in that Stalin gave Hitler all the help he needed to come to power, and thereafter provided him with an incentive for attacking the Soviet Union while there was still time to crush its might. Stalin's heirs might be forgiven for thinking that this was a valuable lesson. They might also suppose that an American-Chinese alliance would prove even more menacing to Russia than the German-Japanese pact concluded in the late 1930's. Hence the desire to make sure that Amer-

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ica's favored ally, the Kuomintang, should not obtain control of China.

So far, Stalinist strategy makes perfect sense in terms of Lenin's last writings. On the other hand, a triangular relationship pitting the USSR against a hostile China governed by self-styled Communists, with the West in the role of arbiter or onlooker, cannot be accommodated within the Leninist framework of 1920-30. It does no good to say that this change has occurred because Lenin's heirs have defaulted, for on Lenin's assumptions such a reversal of roles is not explicable. If his analysis was correct, two events ought to have occurred after 1945: the Sino-Soviet alliance should have remained in being, and Western imperialism should have suffered a mortal blow from the loss of its colonial possessions in Africa and Asia. Alternatively, if it is said that Western capitalism survived, even though imperialism—in the form it had assumed around 1920—was wrecked by the Second World War and its aftermath, then it seems to follow that imperialism was after all *not* the "highest stage" of capitalism, but merely a passing political arrangement which in due course was replaced by a new sort of relationship between the rich and the poor, the developed and the undeveloped, the oppressors and the oppressed. And where does one place the USSR in this picture? On the assumptions current in the literature of ultra-leftism, every developed industrial country, whether socialist or not, participates automatically in the oppression and exploitation of the Third World, simply by virtue of the latter's economic lag. But if this is so, then the old distinction between socialism and imperialism is untenable. Whichever way one looks at it, Lenin's writings during the last years of his life are no longer a safe guide even for Leninists.

In its original form, Lenin's theory of imperialism fulfilled a dual function. In the first place it was intended to account for the surge of European and American overseas expansion during the last quarter of the 19th century and for the national conflicts resulting therefrom. Secondly, it related to structural changes within late capitalism, variously described as the age of finance capital or of monopoly. In its later version, this analysis also attempts to encompass the phenomenon of fascism. For P. M. Sweezy, writing in 1942, "fascism, as it exists in Germany and Italy, is one form which imperialism assumes in the age of wars of redivision. . . . Fascism arises under certain specific historical conditions which are in turn the product of the impact of imperialist wars of redivision on the economic and social structure of advanced capitalist nations."[16] This cautious formulation allows for phenomena such as Japanese militarism after 1931 which can be classified as imperialist, but not as fascist, since there was neither a popular mass movement nor an attempt to establish a one-party state. But just because the formula is flexible enough to permit of major deviations from the rule, it is not very helpful as an explanation of why fascism arose in Italy (a relatively backward country when measured by industrial standards) and in Germany (an extremely advanced one). Moreover, it ignores the simultaneous growth of fascist tendencies in countries such as Poland, Rumania, and Hungary which could not well be credited with imperialist tendencies.

Neither does it help much to be told: "The ideology and program of fascism reflect the social position of the middle classes and in this respect are merely an intensification of attitudes which have already been shown to be characteristic of imperialism."[17] Who or what are "the middle classes"? Italian and German fascism arose after 1918 among nationalist officers returning from the war, intellectuals (some of them former socialists or syndicalists) in search of a new orientation, students attracted by pesudo-socialist rant against "finance capital," artistic bohemia, and the *lumpenproletariat*. The leadership of the movement was made up of demagogues and adventurers coming from all classes, while the fighting strength was supplied by the petty nobility and gentry, most of whom had been enrolled as officers during the 1914-18 war. The old propertied middle class adhered only very slowly and reluctantly, while the new "middle class" of salaried office employees floated about in a vacuum, and eventually came down on the fascist side under the impact of mass unemployment, socialist incompetence, and the collapse of liberal democracy. The entire phenomenon was historically unique and had no sequel after the 1939-45 war, which was vastly more destructive of lives and property, and which completed the ruin of the old middle class and peasantry over wide areas of Europe. It is impossible to dissociate fascism from the nationalist movements which preceded it, and which for historical reasons were far more virulent in Italy and Germany than in France or Britain. Causal explanations of a sociological type are too mechanical to serve as a guide. One may also suspect that they came into fashion only because Lenin was no longer there to dampen the ardor of his disciples.

The Leninist theory of imperialism proper is rather more firmly grounded. Although induced by Hobson's empirical analysis of 1902, it avoids the theoretical mistake of making capital investment abroad dependent on underconsumption at home. For Hobson, the "taproot of Imperialism" was the failure of consumption to keep up with production. Lack of investment opportunity at home generated a drive to extend imperial rule over dependent territories, where capital could safely and profitably be invested.[18] Lenin rejected underconsumption as an explanation, putting in its stead Hilferding's theory of finance

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capital as the driving force behind expansionism and empire-building. He thus avoided the trap of having to explain why profits could be made more easily from starving peasants abroad than from relatively well-paid workers at home.[19] At the same time, however, he introduced the falling rate of profit as an explanation of the imperialist search for colonial super-profits. In point of fact, the bulk of British investment, before and after 1914, went to the developed industrial areas of Western Europe, North America, South Africa, and Australia-New Zealand, leaving the dependent tropical empire starved of investment capital. After 1945 this became the standard reproach against the historical record of British imperialism, but if one accepts it, one cannot at the same time affirm that colonial exploitation was a major source of profits for the British investor at the peak of the imperialist era.

The really decisive factor in the interrelation between the metropolis and the empire was the economic development of the white-settler "dominions"—Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa—through the investment of British capital. Colonial super-profits were marginal, and the annexationist drive after 1880, which led to the "scramble for Africa," is best understood as a political reaction to the threat posed by American, German, Russian, and French competition in a hypothetical future. Down to 1913, British capital still regarded the whole world as its oyster. Joseph Chamberlain's protectionist schemes were rejected precisely for this reason. As for colonial super-profits having served to corrupt the working class, British socialist historians have not been slow to point out that the years before 1914 witnessed a peak of working-class militancy.[20]

This is not to say, however, that Lenin was wrong so far as the 1920's and 1930's are concerned. His analysis stands up quite well when considered against the background of the inter-war period. Paradoxically, it became more appropriate *after* he had published *Imperialism* in 1916, for in that year the old dynastic empires of Eastern Europe were still in existence, whereas from about 1920 the term "empire" signified above all the British Empire, and secondly the rival American and Japanese "co-prosperity spheres" in Latin America and East Asia respectively. If imperialism was defined to mean capital export to dependent territories, plus stagnation at home, the Britain of Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain was a perfect example of the sort of thing Lenin had in mind. There was even a deliberate attempt to divert British capital investment abroad to the dependent Empire: the sort of thing Joseph Chamberlain had preached without success around 1900. In those days the City of London and the Liberal party proved able to defend free trade against Chamberlain's "imperialist" (i.e., protectionist) assault, even though he found allies among the Fabians, as well as among landlords, manufacturers, and Tory diehards. After 1918 the Liberal party went into decline and the Conservatives became increasingly protectionist, to the point of identifying themselves quite openly with monopolist interests lying within the special protected sphere of the British Empire officially so described. This was a departure from the golden age when the entire world lay open to British manufacturers and investors. It was plainly due to increasingly stringent American, German, and Japanese competition, and to that extent it represented a defensive reaction explicable on Marxist-Leninist lines:

> British capitalism did not . . . share before 1914 the special characteristics of the German industrial structure which Lenin saw as the essence of what he called the "Imperialist stage" of capitalist evolution. After 1919, however, Britain also began to exhibit more and more of these characteristics of monopoly concentration and financial domination that Lenin had analyzed in Germany. Not only the growth of oligopoly, but conversion to protection from free trade and concentration on empire markets, all marked the British economy in the inter-war years. And it was increasingly in relation to the closed doors of empire trade that Germany, Italy, and Japan were challenging the "have" powers. Britain and the other allied powers presented a barrier to the natural development of Germany.[21]

THE "division of the world among the great international trusts" foreseen by Lenin in 1916 did in fact occur in the 1920's and 1930's. The major industries assumed a monopolistic or quasi-monopolistic structure, and the resulting giant combines entered into cartel agreements to divide the world market up between them. From then on, although competition did not cease, it assumed a different form, agreed share-outs taking the form of price cutting. Since the major combines normally had government support, economic and political "spheres of interest" tended to coalesce. In all these respects the pre-1914 era could serve as a model, with the proviso that Britain had now become a convert to protectionism. Did this result in a new form of imperialism? As we have seen, liberalism and capitalism were perfectly compatible as long as British industry dominated the world market. The partnership fell to pieces when an increasingly defensive Britain retreated behind tariff walls during the 1930's. The trouble is that no general rule can be deduced from these occurrences. Protection by its nature is of service to stagnant or declining industries, but it is also an essential element in the growth of new and highly efficient ones during their pioneering age. Bismarckian Germany in the 1880's turned protectionist not because its industries were stagnant, but because they needed a political shield be-

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hind which to prepare themselves for the coming struggle to conquer the world market. The same applies to the America of Theodore Roosevelt, whereas Franklin Roosevelt could afford to entertain his partners in 1943-45 with visions of a world thrown open to international trade on the classical liberal model. He evoked no response from Stalin, and only the most restrained enthusiasm from Winston Churchill, a former free-trader reluctantly converted to the belief that the British Empire needed tariff walls to protect itself from American competition.[22]

If protectionism can occur both at the beginning and at the close of an "imperial" era, the same is evidently true of militarism and navalism. Here too historical evidence discloses no correlation with either the "lowest" or the "highest" stage of economic development, but rather a random distribution of political currents making for greater or lesser aggressiveness. A good example is provided by German naval policy before 1914 which was clearly in the service of a conscious attempt to break the British stranglehold on Continental affairs. On the evidence assembled by Professor Fritz Fischer and other historians there is no doubt that the ruling class of Wilhelminian Germany—plus most of the liberal opposition and a substantial slice of the trade unions and the pre-war Social Democrats—was fully committed to "imperial" expansion overland and overseas; but by no means the entire political elite was in favor of challenging the British Empire. Moreover, the naval enterprise was counter-productive from the imperialist standpoint, since it brought about a coalition of Germany's enemies against her.[23]

Among Lenin's Socialist contemporaries, Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919) occupies an important place, and her *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913) still holds the attention of academic economists who regard her theoretical solution of the problem as mistaken. For the rest, the book must rank as a period piece. In introducing it to a British audience in 1951, Mrs. Joan Robinson at one point felt obliged to note, "On the purely analytical plane her affinity seems to be with Hobson rather than with Keynes." Considering the date, hardly a surprise. But the work has a dimension that lifts it beyond the range of scholastic wrangling over the reproduction schemata in Volume II of *Capital*. Rosa Luxemburg wrote about capital accumulation because she stood in need of an explanation for something that was actually going on in the Europe of her day: an arms race pointing straight to the catastrophe of 1914. In a sense she knew the answer before she had formulated her question: militarism represented an outlet for an unmanageable surplus generated in the capitalist production process. The thesis would have gained in plausibility had it been sharpened to the point of stating that arms expenditure creates no problems for a capitalist market economy because it is wasteful and does not compete with productive forms of investment. The issue does not emerge clearly, and a perfectly valid sociological analysis of militarism as an instrument of expansion into the pre-industrial hinterland of the modern world is transformed into an unconvincing explanation of how surplus value is realized.

The true interest of the argument lies in its emphasis on the disruptive effect of capitalism upon the "natural economy" of peoples not yet introduced to the blessings of a "free" market economy, with its familiar "civilized" refusal to recognize the existence of human beings other than paying customers. Even if there is some extravagance in identifying "European civilization" with "commodity exchange with European capital,"[24] it does no harm to be reminded that the incidental blessings of Westernization came in the wake of colonial plunder and the forcible disruption of peasant economies. From here the road is short to a discussion of international loans and their consequences. "The imperialist phase of capitalist accumulation which implies universal competition comprises the industrialization and capitalist emancipation of the hinterland where capital formerly realized its surplus value. Characteristic of this phase are: lending abroad, railroad construction, revolutions, and wars."[25]

Hobson and Hilferding in their different ways had anticipated this line of reasoning, but Rosa Luxemburg synthesized Hobson's empirical description with Hilferding's theoretical analysis. The result at times sounds startlingly "modern," e.g., "Imperialism is the political expression of the accumulation of capital in its competitive struggle for what remains still open of the non-capitalist environment."[26] This may stand as an example of the process whereby a theorist intuitively hits upon an important discovery by way of unsound premises and faulty reasoning. The passage concludes with a piece of apocalyptic rhetoric: "Though imperialism is the historical method for prolonging the career of capitalism, it is also a sure means of bringing it to a swift conclusion . . . the mere tendency toward imperialism of itself takes forms which make the final phase of capitalism a period of catastrophe." Why only the final phase? And where is the evidence that the imperialist phase represents finality?

Imperial Germany before 1914 was a country where the drive toward the creation of an economically self-sufficient *Mitteleuropa* could not be overlooked, and Rosa Luxemburg duly pounced on Schmoller. Those Bismarckian conservatives who styled themselves, or were styled by others, *Kathedersozialisten* (socialists of the chair—meaning the academic chair) had by 1900 become not only protectionists but economic autarchists. In other words, they were on the road

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to imperialism in the modern sense of the term, complete with geopolitics and resentful side-glances at the three empires (Great Britain, Russia, and the U.S.) already in existence. From there it was only a short step to the demand that Germany acquire a navy strong enough to break the British stranglehold, and thus become, if not a world power, at least a desirable ally of the Big Three. Schmoller led the chorus, while insisting that it was Germany's high task to see to it that in the 20th century the Three Empires should not subject the remainder of the world to "a brutal neo-mercantilism." Rosa Luxemburg noted all this and was properly sarcastic about it. At the same time she virtually adopted the classical liberal argument that capitalism was a world system, hence not subject to "the bookish decrees issued by German scholars" enamored of national autarchy. On the same grounds, she dismissed out of hand Struve's suggestion that a country possessing a sufficiently large territory and population could turn itself into a self-contained whole. Struve, who had once been a Marxist, was clearly thinking of his native Russia. To Luxemburg, writing in 1913, he was a latter-day *narodnik* who did not understand the operation of capitalism as a global system which automatically subordinated all national units to its infernal logic. There is some reason to believe that Trotsky, who possessed no grasp of economics, derived from Luxemburg his obstinate conviction that "socialism in one country" was not merely reactionary but unworkable for economic reasons alone. If so, Luxemburg may have been responsible for equipping the Trotskyist movement with a universalist perspective which made better sense in the liberal age than in the political reality of a neo-mercantilist era.

After this brief excursion we may now turn to Schumpeter's alternative explanation of imperialism, for the most part couched in the form of a running commentary on the Austro-Marxist doctrine produced by Otto Bauer and Rudolf Hilferding. There is no point in bothering the reader with Keynes's disquisitions on the topic. His rather circumspect praise of the mercantilists has already been noted. Keynes was a critic of the "classics" (that is, of Alfred Marshall and his pupils) in that he did not believe the market economy could stay in equilibrium without state intervention. For the rest, his *General Theory* has no bearing on our subject, or in the wider issues of technological change and industrialization. This suggests a more general observation which is likely to give offense in Anglo-American academic quarters: Continental Europeans (professional economists included) have some trouble with the notion that in the 1930's there occurred a cataclysmic event known as the "Keynesian revolution." No such volcanic disturbance ever came to their attention, either before or after 1945. What they observed was that the 1939-45 war had instituted full employment, after rearmament had already done so in Germany between 1933 and 1939. Thereafter, all Western governments, for political reasons, were clearly unwilling to let unemployment mount to crisis proportions. In Eastern Europe there was no problem anyway, since industrialization under conditions of total state ownership left no room for the uncontrolled play of market forces. But these forces were not allowed to work themselves out "freely" in the West either—not even in West Germany or Japan, where the economy was anyhow kept going by a colossal export boom. For some reason, no one in authority in these countries found it necessary to invoke Keynes in support of full employment policies, which were quite simply accepted as a political necessity. What the Europeans did notice was that the country where Keynes enjoyed the highest reputation—Britain—also had the worst economic record.[27]

If Keynes had by 1935 come to equivocate on the topic of mercantilism—and by implication on that of economic nationalism and state intervention to insure adequate capital investment at home—Schumpeter in 1919 was writing under the impact of the Anglo-German conflict which had issued in the war of 1914-18. *Imperialism and Social Classes*[28] had been drafted during the war years and was plainly intended as a tract for the times: specifically as a warning to the Germans not to relapse into the political follies which had laid them low. But the essay also had a theoretical content, impartially aimed at protectionist conservatives on the Right and the Bauer-Hilferding school of Marxism on the Left. It did not deal with Lenin, whose pamphlet on imperialism became available in German only in 1920, and it had only an indirect reference to Rosa Luxemburg's work of which Schumpeter may or may not have been aware. If he was, he cannot have taken much interest in her critique of previous Marx interpreters and he would certainly have disagreed with her indictment of imperialism as the political tool of capitalist expansion in the West's pre-industrial hinterland. For it was of the essence of his position that capitalism could get on very well without imperialism. This of course was the traditional liberal faith, but Schumpeter added something new and original—an analysis of imperialism as the outgrowth of pre-bourgeois forms of social life. Imperialism was not merely retrogressive from a laissez-faire standpoint: it was quite specifically linked with the survival of ancient and outdated modes of thought anchored in the existence of social strata whose political hegemony had shaped the world of the emerging bourgeoisie:

> Whoever seeks to understand Europe must not overlook that even today its life, its ideology, its politics are greatly under the influence of the

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feudal "substance," that while the bourgeoisie can assert its interests everywhere, it "rules" only in exceptional circumstances, and then only briefly. The bourgeois outside his office and the professional man of capitalism outside his profession cut a very sorry figure. Their spiritual leader is the rootless "intellectual," a slender reed open to every impulse and a prey to unrestrained emotionalism. The "feudal" elements, on the other hand, have both feet on the ground, even psychologically speaking. Their ideology is as stable as their way of life. . . . This quality of possessing a definite character and cast of mind as a class . . . extends their power far beyond their actual bases. . . .

Imperialist absolutism has patterned not only the economy of the bourgeoisie but also its mind —in the interests of autocracy and against those of the bourgeoisie itself. This significant dichotomy in the bourgeois mind—which in part explains its wretched weakness in politics, culture, and life generally; earns it the understandable contempt of the Left and the Right; and proves the accuracy of our diagnosis—is best exemplified by two phenomena that are very close to our subject: present-day nationalism and militarism. . . .

Nationalism and militarism, while not creatures of capitalism, become "capitalized" and in the end draw their best energies from capitalism. Capitalism involves them in its workings and thereby keeps them alive, politically as well as economically. And they, in turn, affect capitalism, cause it to deviate from the course it might have followed alone, support many of its interests. . . .[29]

If only the European bourgeoisie had known its own interests, it would have avoided the imperialist madness leading to 1914-18. This was virtually what Kautsky had suggested in 1914-15 and what had made Lenin so angry. It is difficult not to feel that Schumpeter juggles with the term "imperialism." True, the European middle class had grown up within an absolutist framework, allowed the landed nobility to run the government for it, and even propped up the dynastic Empires of the Hohenzollerns, Habsburgs, and Romanovs. But that same middle class had by 1914 spawned a plutocratic upper stratum which coalesced with the ruling elites of the ancient monarchies and rendered them more, rather than less, aggressive and expansionist. Schumpeter's ingenious apology made some sense for his native Austria-Hungary, but then the Habsburg monarchy was a political anachronism. There was nothing weak or contemptible about great German industrialists like Walter Rathenau, or for that matter great scholars like Max Weber, an arch-exponent of nationalism and imperialism both before and after 1918.

Moreover, Schumpeter undercut his own position by taking over the laissez-faire argument and then reluctantly conceding the validity of the Marxist thesis concerning the link between protectionism, monopoly capitalism, and external aggression. First, the restatement of classical liberal orthodoxy: "It may be stated as being beyond controversy that where free trade prevails, *no* class has an interest in forcible expansion as such."[30] ". . . since protectionism is not an essential characteristic of the capitalist economy—otherwise the English national economy would scarcely be capitalist—it is apparent that any economic interest in forcible expansion on the part of a people or a class is not necessarily a product of capitalism."[31] Unfortunately protectionism does exist and has nefarious consequences, especially when combined with the drive toward monopoly. ". . . under free trade only *international* cartels would be possible" and Schumpeter regards them as harmless, since under such conditions "there would be conflicts in economic interests neither among different nations nor among the corresponding classes of different nations."[32] "A protectionist policy, however, does facilitate the formation of cartels and trusts. And it is true that this circumstance thoroughly alters the alignment of interests. It was neo-Marxist doctrine that first tellingly described this causal connection (Bauer) and fully recognized the significance of the 'functional change in protectionism' (Hilferding)."[33] The change comes about because trusts and cartelized industries protected by tariff walls establish monopoly prices at home, while dumping their surplus abroad, in some cases below cost; the consequence is "a conflict of interests between nations that becomes so sharp that it cannot be overcome by the existing basic community of interests."[34]

THIS CONCLUSION does not seem to be very far removed from the Marxist position, at least in its Austrian version; and yet Schumpeter insists that "Imperialism . . . is atavistic in character. It falls into that large group of surviving features from earlier ages that play such an important part in every concrete social situation."[35] For the same reason he is convinced that imperialism has no real roots in the working class. "Social imperialism in the sense of imperialist interests on the part of the workers, interests to which an imperialist attitude ought to correspond, if the workers only understood it correctly—such an imperialist policy oriented toward working-class interests is nonsensical. *A people's imperialism is today an impossibility.*"[36] Whereas presumably in earlier days it made sense, because e.g., the *populus Romanus* as a whole profited from the *imperium*. On Schumpeter's assumptions, as stated in 1919, Italian and German fascism were inexplicable. He might have rejoined that both terminated in disaster. But this does not alter the fact that a "people's imperialism" was just what the Italian and German working classes—or anyway the bulk of them—came to believe in for a time.

European politics in the 1920's and 1930's are

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not analyzable in terms of pre-bourgeois survivals, although these "residues" played a part in determining the tolerance with which the ancient nobility and gentry viewed plebeian demagogues playing at Caesarism. Certainly these declining classes threw their weight in the fascist scale, but when all is said and done the historian has to register the uncomfortable fact that no class proved immune to the infection. The matter can be stated in fairly simple terms: as long as the bourgeoisie retained its faith in liberal democracy, the working class did the same (albeit in the form of social-democratic reformism); when the middle class turned fascist, the working class followed suit. Had it been otherwise, the Third Reich could never have waged war as it did.[87]

II

AMONG CONTEMPORARY writers adhering to the radical Left, the term "imperialism" is commonly employed to designate four quite different kinds of relationships which Lenin had been careful to distinguish: 1) national oppression of the sort practiced in the old dynastic East European empires before 1914-18; 2) colonialism of the Anglo-Indian type during and after the mercantilist era; 3) "liberal imperialism," classically represented by the British and subsequently the American drive to throw all foreign markets open to Western capital; 4) the transfer of surplus value from the poor countries to the rich through trade relationships which discriminate against undeveloped economies. By running these different meanings together one can achieve startling rhetorical effects without coming any closer to an up-to-date theory of imperialism. Types 1) and 2) are historically outmoded, which is not to say that national oppression has vanished—on the contrary, it is fairly widespread, notably in African and Asian countries recently emancipated from the European yoke. Types 3) and 4) are currently the target of widespread denunciation both in Anglo-American literature and among radical nationalists in the Third World.[88]

In the great age of Marxist economic theorizing, between 1910 and 1930, a theory of capitalist imperialism was worked out by Hilferding, Luxemburg, Lenin, Bukharin, and other writers, with the intention of differentiating the topic from the more general subject of dynastic expansion and national oppression: the former being rooted in the feudal age, the latter too familiar to lend itself to theoretical treatment, and in any case not a suitable theme for economic analysis. Since 1945 the emphasis has increasingly shifted from 3) to 4), with liberals and socialists putting forward rival explanations of what has caused uneven development within a world economy dominated by the industrial-capitalist nexus. In its latest transmogrification the debate has been further enriched by the Maoist thesis that there exists a form of socialist imperialism represented by the USSR, though oddly enough this phenomenon is supposed to have made its appearance only since the demise of Stalin in 1953. Much of this literature, while scholarly in appearance, is in fact propagandist, and the same applies to the productions of the liberal-imperialist school.[89]

If confusion is to be avoided, it seems desirable to eliminate types 1) and 2) from the agenda, with the obvious proviso that even revolutionary nationalism may become the breeding-ground of expansionism. Whether one chooses to describe this familiar phenomenon as imperialism seems to be a semantic matter. If in the ancient democratic tradition, which Marx and Engels inherited from the predecessors of the 1848 revolutionary movement, one identifies imperialism with national oppression, then the present-day USSR in some respects does not differ greatly from the Empire of the Romanovs. This would certainly be the opinion of the citizens of Czechoslovakia, and probably of most East Europeans, including not a few leading Communists. Support for this unflattering conclusion can be found in Lenin's writings, which is why their interpretation has become a very awkward matter for the present rulers of what is officially styled the Soviet Union.

But we do not advance the discussion of Marxist theory by making the obvious point that Lenin and others recognized a difference between precapitalist and specifically modern types of imperialism. At most this distinction makes it easier to account for the existence of (a) capitalism without empire and (b) empire without capitalism. The former has become typical of contemporary Western Europe; the latter appears to be a fairly accurate description of the USSR plus its East European client states. Since imperialism is older than capitalism, there seems to be no particular reason why the two should not be dissociated: to the point perhaps of laying the groundwork of an as yet nonexistent theory of post-capitalist imperialism. Such a theory, if and when it comes into being, will have to take the Stalinist era for its starting point. What it will look like, it is too early to say, but it seems improbable that the analysis of market relations will figure prominently within it.

A Marxist theory of capitalist imperialism must in any case take for its starting point Marx's well-known dictum: "The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself." Marx goes on to say: "It is that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting and the closing point, the motive and the purpose of production; that production is only production for *capital* and not vice versa, the means of production are not mere means for a constant expansion of the living process of the *society* of producers. . . . The means—unconditional development of the productive forces of society—comes

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continually into conflict with the limited purpose, the self-expansion of the existing capital. The capitalist mode of production is for this reason a historical means of developing the material forces of production and creating an appropriate world market, and is at the same time a continual conflict between this its historical task and its own corresponding relations of social production."[40] Viewed from some such perspective, the phenomenon of imperialism loses its seeming irrationality, although this does not exclude the possibility of specific irrationalities which in retrospect appear as gigantic political follies or miscalculations. Thus it is arguable that on any rational calculation of chances, the behavior of the German and Japanese ruling groups in the first half of this century was absurd. Circumstances of this kind certainly demand an explanation, but the latter falls into the province of the historian. On an overall view, imperialism makes sense, at any rate for the hegemonial power in control of the system during a given historical epoch. At the same time imperialism acts as a brake upon the economic development of regions controlled—directly or indirectly—by the imperial metropolis, and to that extent it constitutes a barrier to capitalist production, inasmuch as it interferes with the growth of precisely those external markets which investors and exporters are in search of.

The contradiction was apparent to Marx, although in his major work he gave no systematic attention to it. His occasional comments on British imperialism in India anticipate some aspects of later controversies among British and other socialists, e.g., "England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of [the] old Asiatic society and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia."[41] This is followed by the observation that the British cannot plunder India without helping to industrialize it. "They intend now drawing a net of railroads over India. The results must be appreciable." "I know that the English millocracy intend to endow India with railways with the exclusive view of extracting at diminished expenses the cotton and other raw materials for their manufactures. But when you have once introduced machinery into the locomotion of a country which possesses iron and coal, you are unable to withhold it from its fabrication. You cannot maintain a net of railways over an immense country without introducing all those industrial processes necessary to meet the immediate and current wants of railway locomotion, and out of which there must grow the application of machinery to those branches of industry not immediately connected with the railways. The railway system will therefore become, in India, truly the forerunner of modern industry. . . . Modern industry, resulting from the railway system, will dissolve the hereditary divisions of labor upon which rest the Indian castes, those decisive impediments to Indian progress and Indian power. . . . At all events, we may safely expect to see, at a more or less remote period, the regeneration of that great and interesting country. . . ."[42]

Contemporary economic historians have noted that Marx expected too much from Indian railroad construction, which in the event opened up a market for British rather than for Indian manufacturers. This does not invalidate the general point he wished to make about the impact of industrial capitalism on backward and dependent countries: "The bourgeois period of history has to create the material basis of the new world—on the one hand the universal intercourse founded upon the mutual dependency of mankind, and the means of that intercourse; on the other hand the development of the productive powers of man and the transformation of material production into a scientific domination of natural agencies."[43] The argument is in tune with a line of reasoning developed five years earlier in the *Communist Manifesto* concerning the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie in pioneering a new mode of production.

ONE MAY say that Marx regarded laissez-faire rather than protection as the "classical" form of capitalist trade relations, and liberal imperialism—the imperialism of free trade—as its political counterpart. The protectionist and social-imperialist movement in Britain after 1900—a movement which obtained substantial support from prominent Fabians, as well as from the geopoliticians of the political Right—would have struck him as an aberration, or alternatively as a symptom of decline. On this issue, since there was no Marxist literature worth mentioning in Britain before the 1930's, the cosmopolitan tradition, and the concurrent critique of imperialism as parasitic and retrograde, was represented by radical liberals such as Hobson. Social-imperialist propaganda for the most part appealed to conservative sentiment, where it merged with Social Darwinism. Its socialist, or pseudo-socialist, fellow travelers in some cases blossomed out as precursors of fascism.[44]

Because the political battle-lines were drawn in this manner, it is easy to overlook the fact that the system which the Liberal party, and subsequently the Labour party, defended down to 1932, when free trade was abandoned, guaranteed Britain's preeminent world position as an exporter of both capital and commodities. "The advantage of the strategic lines of the empire was the preservation of a world of free trade."[45] The muddle into which radical liberals like Hobson got themselves over this issue was due to their tendency to identify imperialism with colonialism. Their American contemporaries and successors did the same, with the result that public attention was focused upon U.S. control of the Philippines, or of some minor Latin American

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republic, while the more important issue of North America's increasingly central position within the global division of labor was ignored. In retrospect it is clear that the era of British predominance was governed by a set of relationships which from the 1930's onward, and more particularly after 1945, became a model for the U.S. policy-makers, especially those among them who quite sincerely saw themselves as serving the cause of universal free trade against the benighted protectionism of the British—not to mention the Axis powers who had gone to war for the stated purpose of carving out exclusive "spheres of influence" for themselves at the expense of everyone else:

> Free trade was the instrument of Britain's industrial supremacy holding back development elsewhere; this condition would, in the end, have checked British growth too, as foreign markets were impoverished. But British capital investment in Europe and North America, and in other lands of European settlement, created the necessary expanding markets for manufactured exports. In the not so long run, it created also new competitors for British industry.[46]

If the dissolution of the "visible" British Empire after 1945 did not have the disastrous consequences often predicted by Conservative politicians, one important explanation at least has to do with the fact that capital and labor had in the past predominantly moved to lands of European settlement. Elsewhere, power was normally transferred to governments which, by and large, did not expropriate Western capital assets. This was partly a consequence of the cold war which from 1945 onward established new political alignments cutting across the simple antagonism of colonizers and colonized. But it also represented an option on the part of nationalist movements intent on industrializing their respective countries with the aid of European, American, and Soviet investments alike. The cold war was, from the standpoint of these political elites, a means of extracting aid from the industrial powers, whether capitalist or nominally socialist. This applies to the greatest of these newly emancipated countries, India, as much as it does to the small states formerly belonging to the French colonial empire in Africa.

Inversely, American reactions were of the familiar liberal kind. Free trade having become the official ideology of the United States after 1945, it was only natural that a treaty embodying laissez-faire principles should have been negotiated by Washington with the Kuomintang government in November 1946.[47] Hence in part the traumatic shock induced three years later by the so-called "loss of China." Hence also the quixotic determination to keep the Chiang Kai-shek regime going at least on Formosa. What one needs to guard against is the notion that it made economic sense for the United States government to boycott mainland China instead of entering into trade relations with it. People who adopt this line of reasoning have transformed Marxism into economic determinism of the crudest kind. Specifically, they fail to see that, in relation to China, both American and Russian policies are inevitably governed by balance-of-power considerations. The Maoist revolution was perceived as a menace to America's world position and opposed on those grounds, not because the Chinese market was of overwhelming importance to U.S. exporters.

When the aggravation of the Sino-Soviet conflict—itself inexplicable on the economist misinterpretation of Marxism—diminished the prevailing fear of a monolithic Communist bloc, Washington showed itself ready to improve relations with mainland China. It is perfectly true that from the official U.S. standpoint the Maoist regime represented a barrier to that unrestricted flow of trade and investment which the liberal ideology postulates as the optimal condition to be sought by policy-makers. But in an imperfect world even a state-controlled economy can become a trading partner for the U.S., and Maoist determination to industrialize without foreign aid at least relieves Washington of one standing source of embarrassment. As for the West European countries, it should not be necessary to emphasize that an embargo on trade with China can never be anything but a nuisance to them.[48]

A tendency to identify imperialism with colonialism is marked at both ends of the political spectrum on the Left: among liberals who reproduce Hobson's mistaken emphasis upon protectionist control of tropical markets and raw materials, and among adherents of Maoism who see corporate power lurking behind every bush and causing the U.S. government to intervene in Asian and Latin American countries, so as to forestall or suppress national revolutions menacing the sources of corporate profit. If these military incursions were to become marginal to the "invisible" hegemony of the United States within the global division of labor, the adherents of both schools would be deprived of a precious argument: the liberals would no longer be able to celebrate the beneficial effects of capital investment in backward areas, and the New Left would be hard put to explain how the corporations keep going, even though they have to compromise with nationalist regimes abroad. The kind of relationship currently subsisting between France and the North African countries could easily reproduce itself in areas formally independent of the United States, and already sufficiently autonomous to expropriate U.S. capital assets—with or without compensation. If this were to occur on a substantial scale, with the tacit connivance of U.S. policy-makers no longer hypnotized by fear of "world Communism," it would not alter the hegemonial position of the

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United States within the North Atlantic region which is anyhow the principal field of U.S. capital investment. In short, it would leave the "imperialism of free trade" intact and in perfect economic health.

There is evidently a distinction to be drawn between U.S. capital investment in Canada or Western Europe, and the flow of such investment to undeveloped regions for the purpose of stimulating the production of oil and other raw materials required by the North American economy. In the former case, U.S. capital flows into mature industrial economies which also happen to be quite efficient competitors in third markets, and even in the U.S. domestic market. In the case of the less developed countries, the chief beneficiaries are extractive industries which may or may not provide a surplus for industrialization. If the latter is artificially held back, the relationship is of the semi-colonial type, and in due course is likely to generate nationalist resentments sufficient to unseat the local oligarchy. If this does not occur, and if a state of dependency upon the imperialist metropolis is perpetuated by political or other means, then the country in question cannot become an important market for industries producing consumer goods. This pattern may perpetuate itself in marginal cases, but it can hardly become the rule without undercutting the rationale of the whole process.

Fully developed industrial countries cannot be controlled by outsiders, and they provide the principal markets for U.S. exports and capital alike. Undeveloped regions either remain in that state, in which case their significance must shrink; or else sufficient revenue will be generated by foreign and local investment to stimulate more rapid all-round development. In this case the relationship, while still unequal, loses its colonial character. Nor does it follow that development does not occur because more wealth is siphoned out in profits than is put in by the investors. Between 1870 and 1914 Britain clearly profited from capital exports—or else they would not have been undertaken. Income received in various forms from foreign investments was substantially larger than the net export of British capital: some £4,000 million against £2,400 million. The same is true, on an even larger scale, of U.S. investments since 1945. But some development takes place nonetheless, even though it does so merely as a by-product of capitalist profit-making.

GIVEN THE dominant position of the United States within the world market in general and the North Atlantic area in particular, it is perhaps not surprising that the current controversy over the problems and prospects of the American Empire should revive some aspects of the earlier British debate. In addition to the conservative-liberal quarrel over protectionism versus free trade, there is the quasi-Marxist interpretation of American imperialism in terms derived from Lenin's analysis of European monopoly capitalism fifty years ago. Until about 1930 that analysis was more relevant to Germany than to Britain, and since 1960 at the latest it has once more ceased to fit the facts, since British capitalism has survived the loss of empire without major trouble. Conversely, West German (and Japanese) capitalism is thoroughly monopolistic, but clearly beyond the colonialist stage, so that once more the equation, monopoly capitalism= colonial imperialism has ceased to fit. On the other hand, it seems to fit the United States, provided one accepts the view that Latin America is *de facto* controlled by U.S. capital and that its nominally independent governments stand in a semi-colonial relationship to the imperial metropolis.

How far this argument can be pushed, in view of Cuba's successful defiance of the North American colossus, and the growth of nationalist tendencies elsewhere in the hemisphere, is a question of some relevance to Maoists, though not to Marxists who are unable to accept Lenin's drastically simplified exposition of Hilferding's argument. What happens, for example, if industrialization should get under way in Latin America with substantial U.S. assistance—public and private—in the interest of creating mass consumer markets for U.S. exports? On theoretical grounds such a development cannot be excluded. If it is blocked by political shortsightedness or corporate stupidity, then the resulting tensions can in principle be resolved without altering the basic nature of the nexus linking North and South America (omitting Cuba, which is kept afloat by Soviet aid for political reasons). If it be said that U.S. corporate investment will siphon out more than is put in, the answer is that nothing but purely political considerations forbids bourgeois-nationalist regimes in Latin America from stopping this reverse flow, or even from seizing major U.S. assets, as in some cases they have already done with complete impunity. Alternatively, if it is maintained that the countries in question will be prevented from embarking upon all-round development, then it follows that they cannot become important markets for U.S. mass-production industries; in which case the issue becomes a domestic one for U.S. interests—including the unions, as well as the exporters—to argue out among themselves, and we are once more back with the familiar quarrel between conservative and liberal factions, with organized labor for the most part enlisted on the liberal side. What, if anything, this has to do with the Leninist equation, it is difficult to understand.

The analysis of modern capitalism in such works as Baran's *Political Economy of Growth* (1957), or Baran's and Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital* (1966), continues a line of reasoning pioneered by Lenin half a century ago. This may be the rea-

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son why these authors and their followers tend to fasten on the growth of corporate power, or on safe topics such as Japan's successful industrialization as against India's miserable record.[49] When all that can be said on these themes has been exhausted, we are no nearer to an understanding of what it is that keeps imperialism going, both in the presence and in the absence of colonial or semi-colonial patterns of dependence.

If the possession of colonies makes no difference to a flourishing capitalism, then what is the relevance of imperialism to an up-to-date theory of how capitalist profit is realized under monopolistic conditions? A plausible answer might be that monopolistic stagnation at home—monopoly being either cause or consequence of stagnation, depending on whether or not the author in question follows Keynesian reasoning on the subject—acts as a stimulus to seek fresh sources of profit abroad. But to say that monopolistic capital tends to invade foreign countries is to say that it helps to develop them—unless one makes the totally unrealistic assumption that exploitation can permanently be divorced from development. In this fashion, American capitalism—like British capitalism in its time—does in fact bring foreign competitors into being, and it does so of necessity, as part of the process whereby capital overflows national boundaries. If this is a contradiction, it is inherent in the way the system operates, and from a Marxist standpoint there is nothing mysterious about it. The industrialization of the Third World is in fact the only major outlet still open to Western capitalism. Whether it will be undertaken depends on political variables. There is nothing in the inherent logic of the system that forbids it.

In arguing against the possibility of a solution along these lines, the adherents of the Leninist school stress the exploitative character of capitalist investment to the exclusion of other factors, so as to arrive at the picture of a self-perpetuating pattern of neo-colonialization which prevents the effective industrialization of backward countries. Magdoff is a notable practitioner of this mode of reasoning: "The integration of less developed capitalisms into the world market as reliable and continuous suppliers of their natural resources results, with rare exceptions, in a continuous dependency on the centers of monopoly control. . . ."[50] Socialist Cuba presumably is an exception, since it combines heavy reliance on sugar production with total dependence on the USSR and its satellites. The other Latin American countries are naturally less well placed, since they depend to a large extent on the United States which, of course, makes all the difference.

In general, integration into the world capitalist market "has almost uniform effects on the supplying countries: 1) they depart from, or never enter, the paths of development that require independence and self-reliance; 2) they lose their economic self-sufficiency and become dependent on exports for their economic viability; 3) their industrial structure becomes adapted to the needs of supplying specialized exports at prices acceptable to the buyers, reducing thereby such flexibility of productive resources as is needed for a diversified and growing economic productivity. The familiar symptom of this process is still seen in Latin America where, despite industrialization efforts and the stimulus of two world wars, well over 90 per cent of most countries' total exports consists of the export of agricultural and mineral products."[51] And where (it might be added) the ruling cliques or military dictatorships are free to break loose from this pattern if they choose to do so. It is true that they are not free to follow the Cuban example without provoking U.S. intervention, but they cannot be prevented from industrializing, or even from introducing state-controlled economies, as long as they do not align themselves externally with the USSR or China. For the purpose of this particular argument the emergence of national-socialist regimes all over Latin America—run by military technocrats and backed by the national intelligentsia—would be quite enough to undermine the thesis that the colonial pattern of dependence is self-perpetuating and unbreakable. It is nothing of the kind.

As a minor by-product of its dependence on Leninism-Stalinism, the Baran-Sweezy-Magdoff type of argument not only ignores Russian exploitation of Eastern Europe—supposedly liberated and presented with a socialist economy after the military takeover of 1945; it grossly inflates the importance of the cold war—a weakness shared by Kolko and other revisionist historians. This perspective makes no allowance for the basic *entente* between Moscow and Washington which dates back to Yalta and was kept going all through the years of political rivalry between the two blocs. The ideological frenzy of the 1950's—reinforced by Stalinist psychopathology on one side and Dullesian drivel on the other—is taken literally by these writers, even though by now their political sympathies are engaged on the side of Cuba and China rather than the USSR. The resulting picture is merely the inverted mirror-image of standard U.S. cold-war literature (now going out of fashion) wherein America was seen to wage a religiously motivated struggle to save the world from the hordes of godless Communism. Standing this familiar nonsense upside down by casting the U.S. in the role of global aggressor results in nothing but further obfuscation.

The actual competition between the two blocs led respectively by Washington and Moscow, and their highly complex relations with the various segments of the Third World, is simplified to the

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point of absurdity. For good measure, the burden of revolution is cast upon the peasantries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, who are to take up where the industrial working class—now supposedly integrated into the system—left off. Thus nationalism is identified with socialism, the peasantry with the proletariat, anti-imperialism with anti-capitalism, until all the distinctions painfully elaborated in socialist literature for a century are cast overboard in favor of a simple dichotomy: imperialism versus the starving masses of the Third World. People equipped with this kind of perspective no longer need a theory: practice grows out of populist sloganeering, as power is supposed to grow from gun barrels. Populism indeed is more relevant to Third World politics than Marxism. The fact is undeniable. Its consequences for the underdevelopment of socialist theorizing in the more advanced countries have yet to be faced.

For Marx it was axiomatic that the establishment of socialism would be brought about by the industrial working class in the most advanced and civilized countries of the globe. He did not rule out the possibility of a non-capitalist form of development in Russia, where the ancient village commune had survived into the modern age; but he made it clear that a transition to socialism would depend on help received from the more advanced countries of Europe, where capitalism was already fully developed. Lenin broke with this tradition when he seized power in 1917, on the grounds that Russia represented the "weakest link" in the imperialist chain. He departed further from orthodoxy when in 1923 he envisaged a confrontation between "the counterrevolutionary imperialist West and the revolutionary and nationalist East, between the most civilized countries of the world and the Orientally backward countries which, however, comprise the majority. . . ."

Lenin did not, however, abandon the idea of a worker-peasant alliance which had always been central to his thinking. Russia was to be the link between the Asian peasant and the European or American city-worker. In the Maoist perspective, the notion of such an alliance has been abandoned. In its place there is the vision of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, under Chinese leadership, constituting "the storm center of the world revolution." This formulation originally arose from a factional dispute between the Russian and Chinese leaderships, but has now acquired the force of dogma, since it has been integrated with Chinese nationalism and China's claim to world leadership. Its unintended consequences include a growing convergence of U.S. and Soviet policies and an abandonment of cold-war postures which had become habitual while Washington and Moscow were on a collision course in Central Europe and elsewhere. One of the odder side-effects of this realignment is the growing irrelevance of solemn historical tracts seeking to show that the United States rather than the USSR took the initiative in unleashing the cold war in 1947: as if it mattered who fired the first shot in a "war" (fought by proxy) to determine the exact consequences of the 1945 Yalta and Potsdam settlements. The Chinese may be forgiven for taking no interest in this topic. Formosa, Korea, and Vietnam are closer to home. Nor is there any good reason why anyone save professional diplomats should get involved in tedious disputes about the origins of the cold war. What really matters is the Maoist strategy of reliance on the Third World, and the new estimate of the peasantry's role in the "anti-imperialist struggle."

Now it should be obvious that whatever successes may be scored by national-revolutionary movements of the Vietnamese type (movements led by "classless" Communist parties drawn from the urban intelligentsia and backed by armed peasants), they cannot defeat or overthrow either capitalism or imperialism as a world system. They cannot do so for the good and sufficient reason that *no* backward country can reshape the global nexus of relationships which, taken together, constitute the modern world of industrial technology (capitalist, state capitalist, or socialist). At most such countries can contract out and choose their own path of development. The limitations imposed upon them in this respect are fairly evident in the case of Cuba, which has to sell its sugar in a market controlled by the USSR, just as Algeria has to sell its products in a market controlled by France and the other industrial economies of Western Europe. This is not to say that these countries cannot pioneer new forms of development adapted to the role of a peasantry which has rid itself of the old landowning class. What they cannot do is provide a model for more advanced societies. Nor is it the case that these upheavals demonstrate the ability of the peasantry to act as a revolutionary class. What they show is the exact opposite: the need for urban leadership if the peasants are to attain their aims. All successful agrarian uprisings in history have been led by urban elements, and the Chinese revolution is no exception. The fact that a section of the radical intelligentsia emigrated to the countryside, after it had failed to seize power in the industrial towns, does not make its subsequent long march to victory a peasant revolution. All it demonstrates is that a centralized organization with a Communist ideology can survive even in a rural milieu. Since Communist parties are classless, elitist, and quite independent of the industrial proletariat even where they are based on it, this circumstance ought to occasion no surprise. Nor is it surprising that, being patriotic and led by urban intellectuals, the Chinese Communist party

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should have taken refuge in the populist gospel.

What Maoism affirms is the natural unity of the entire people when rallied around a truly patriotic and classless leadership imbued with the proper convictions and determined to serve the national interest against domestic and foreign enemies. This ideology, which is approximately as old as the hills, has nothing in common with Marxism, but it can be described as populist socialism for want of a better term. People who sponsor such notions may be conservatives or revolutionaries, depending on circumstances not of their making. Chinese revolutionary populism is certainly the most radical doctrine ever preached to peasants by urban intellectuals. Inasmuch as it represents a commitment to "building socialism" in a pre-capitalist and pre-industrial environment, it is likewise in an established tradition: that of the 19th-century Russian *narodniki,* minus their belief in the providential role of the Slavic peoples, which has survived in the popular Russian understanding of Leninism. Unlike Stalinism, the Chinese version does not rely solely on terror and does not aim at the liquidation of the peasantry as a class. For the rest, it is fully integrated with Chinese nationalism and ethnocentrism. This lends it a powerful appeal and makes it acceptable to the peasantry and indeed to the people as a whole. It also constitutes a reason for not confusing this kind of revolutionary nationalism with authentic socialism.

III

An attempt must now be made to pull the strands of the argument together. This is not rendered easier by the fact that historical and theoretical considerations tend to get in each other's way. To take a fairly obvious instance, the term "capitalism" relates to a global system which includes Japan and is therefore not coextensive with "the West," although for practical purposes the system may currently be said to have its major politico-economic center in the North American area: specifically, in the United States. Again, when one speaks of "imperialism" one may be tempted to look for formally constituted empires held together by military force. In this sense, the two great political alliances which have confronted each other since American and Russian troops first met on the Elbe river in 1945 are "empires" controlled respectively from Washington and Moscow; but this usage, albeit hallowed by tradition, is so vague and sociologically empty as to be meaningless for analytical purposes. If there is an American Empire confronting a Russian Empire, we may as well resign ourselves to the impossibility of saying anything specific about imperialism in the meaning that term acquired, for liberals and socialists alike, during the first half of the present century. The ancient Chinese empire, and the "imperialism" described in Hobson's tract on the subject, have nothing in common save for the occasional employment of force: too vague and general a criterion for our purpose.

Militarism fares no better. It is as old as history, and so is arms expenditure. As for the notion that present-day monopolistic capitalism, notably in the United States, is kept going by what is popularly known as "the arms economy," one would like to know why Japanese capitalism has managed to grow three or four times as fast as its American rival while spending only one per cent of the gross national product on arms. There must be something wrong with an argument that leads to such absurd conclusions. It is manifestly the case that there has been an enormous increase in unproductive public expenditure on arms: $120 billion of world spending in one year, according to a United Nations study in 1962, and a great deal more with the further escalation since that date. But the notion that this kind of waste production is burdensome only for a socialist economy, not a capitalist one, is implausible. Individual corporations naturally profit from arms expenditure the end product of which is stored by governments and does not compete with private firms in the market. But the resulting growth in the tax burden, and in the size of the national debt, interferes with normal productive investment, hinders the accumulation of capital, and renders the country in question less competitive in the world market.

Taken to its logical conclusion, the arms-economy argument implies that waste production must be constantly expanded to offset stagnation and to maintain a tolerable level of employment. But in that case no significant capital accumulation would take place any longer and the system would cease to be capitalist; it would be taken over by the state and its further growth would be determined not by profits but by purely political considerations. Quite possibly something of the sort will occur one day, but capitalism will then have come to an end. Under present-day conditions the arms economy acts as a stabilizer only insofar as it does not seriously interfere with productive investment. Hence the argument that militarism can be deduced from the logic of capitalism is invalid. An economy wholly dependent on unproductive and unprofitable public expenditure would no longer be capitalist.[52]

If it be said that the stagnation of monopolistic capitalism is just what has given rise to the phenomenon of an arms economy—the state is obliged to organize waste production because capital expansion based on profitable investment is insufficient to guarantee employment and stability—then why is this feature so much more pronounced in the United States than elsewhere? The explanation obviously has to do with the arms race and with America's role within the

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world economy and the global system of political relations based upon it. But empirical considerations of this sort are extraneous to a theoretical model which deduces the necessity of an ever-growing arms budget from a long-run tendency toward stagnation. Arms production makes for inflationary price rises and is a bar to greater competitiveness, as are "limited" wars against national-revolutionary movements in Asia—quite apart from the fact that they cannot be "won" in any reasonable sense of the term. This is just why the whole issue has become a serious factor in splitting the supposedly united front of the "corporate establishment."

The only way in which the theoretical model can be linked to the arms race and the cold war is by treating entire nations—notably the U.S. and the USSR—on the analogy of monopolistic competitors in the world market. In the present case, however, the rivals are equipped with nuclear arsenals, a circumstance that eliminates the distinction between politics and economics which was the fundamental presupposition of all previous theorizing. So far from constituting a plausible theory of imperialist competition, this kind of analogy makes it plain that the Leninist model has become unworkable. Imperialist rivalry over spheres of interest is something qualitatively different from a global confrontation in which the very existence of mankind is at stake. Such a situation was not predictable in 1920, just as the ominous possibility of a nuclear showdown between two nominally "Communist" states could not have been foreseen by Lenin and his contemporaries. To describe this state of affairs as "oligopolistic competition between whole economies" is to play with words.[53] Insofar as the nuclear blocs compete, their aim is planetary control, not the carving out of influence spheres, an aim still pursued in the traditional manner by the lesser powers. Moreover, the East-West split, which for a while seemed to validate the Leninist schema and its Stalinist successor, is becoming increasingly irrelevant, while the North-South division between the developed countries and the rest, which has replaced it, is inexplicable in Leninist terms, since the USSR—nominally a socialist state—is cast in the role of exploiter of the poor countries. NATO could still be fitted into a Leninst framework if one was willing to accept the Stalinist picture of a world divided between "socialism" and "capitalist imperialism." The growing *détente* between Washington and Moscow, and the concurrent worsening of relations between the Soviet Union and China, has made it impossible even for Stalinists to perpetuate this kind of talk. There is no reason why non-Stalinists should oblige them by treating the cold war as the overriding political fact of the post-1945 era, when it was merely an episode in the gradual working out of a Soviet-American partnership based on the tacit acceptance of a divided Europe, and carefully controlled rivalry in Third-World areas. A relationship of this kind does not exclude occasional hostilities, much as the informal (but highly effective) Anglo-Russian *entente* after the Napoleonic wars did not prevent sharp conflicts over the disposal of the Turkish Empire, on one occasion (in 1853-56) even leading to war. On this analogy, the coming of the nuclear age simply means that such wars are more likely to be fought by proxy.

In practice much of the aforesaid is now recognized by New Left theorists of imperialism and anti-imperialism, which is why attention has increasingly shifted to the North-South antagonism. Incongruous survivals of the earlier Leninist-Stalinist orthodoxy are still encountered among writers who try to make themselves and their readers believe that U.S. foreign policy can be analyzed in terms of capital investment. On this topic it is best to listen to Robert L. Heilbroner, a professional economist who has the additional advantage of being a socialist quite uncommitted to the standard American attitude on the subject of Communist-led revolutions abroad:

> Of our roughly $50 billion in overseas investment, some $10 billion are in mining, oil, utility, and manufacturing facilities in Latin America, some $4 billion in Asia including the Near East, and about $2 billion in Africa. To lose these assets would deal a heavy blow to a number of large corporations, particularly in oil, and would cost the nation as a whole the loss of some $3 to 4 billion a year in earnings from those areas. A Marxist might conclude that the economic interests of a capitalist nation would find such a prospective loss insupportable, and that it would be "forced" to go to war. I do not think this is a warranted assumption, although it is undoubtedly a risk. Against a Gross National Product that is approaching ¾ of a trillion dollars and with corporate assets over $1.3 trillion, the loss of even the whole $16 billion in the vulnerable areas should be manageable economically. Whether such a takeover could be resisted politically—that is, whether the red flag of Communism could be successfully waved by the corporate interests—is another question.[54]

It is interesting that even so well-informed and sophisticated a writer as Heilbroner should credit the Marxist school indiscriminately with the kind of reasoning about the decisive role of investment in backward areas which Lenin inherited from the laissez-faire liberal Hobson. Contemporary Marxists are more likely to interest themselves in the hegemonial role of U.S. capital within the North Atlantic area than in populist fantasies about the corporations going to war to save their assets in the Philippines.[55]

The real question is not whether the U.S. economy can survive the loss of corporate invest-

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ments in politically unstable areas—it can and will—but what the capital flow is doing to the development of backward countries. On this issue laissez-faire apologists of "free" unregulated capitalism have traditionally had to battle on two fronts: against socialists on the Left and nationalists on the Right. The failure to recognize this has been among the major weaknesses of the Marxist school. Hence in part the Comintern's inability to understand fascism, and the bewilderment of orthodox Stalinists in Cuba when faced with Castro's victorious movement in 1959.

Generally speaking, liberals and Marxists alike have been very bad at understanding what nationalism is about. What little there is to be found in Leninist literature on the subject of national-revolutionary movements does not make up for this lacuna, the less so since Leninists seem congenitally unable to admit that the decisive stratum is not the so-called national bourgeoisie (which hardly exists anywhere during the pre-industrial stage), but the intelligentsia. It is the latter, at the head of the proletariat or the peasantry, which makes up the core of all revolutionary movements in backward countries. It is the intelligentsia which decides whether the modernization drive shall take place under Communist, fascist, pseudo-socialist, or straightforward nationalist slogans. And it is the intelligentsia—civilian or military, in any case urban and classless—which seizes power. Having done so it establishes a dictatorship, normally in the form of the one-party state, and imposes modernization on the masses of workers and peasants—in the name of the people, of course. It does so through the agency of state power. If necessary it employs the state to liquidate entire classes, as in Russia under Stalin. In the process of course it has to turn itself into a bureaucracy, which is why its roots in the old pre-revolutionary intelligentsia tend to be overlooked. But it is still the same elitist strategy that imposes the "revolution from above" upon the masses, even if the old revolutionary vanguard is exterminated by a totalitarian state party, itself both product and prime agent of the modernization process. The latter, needless to say, subjects workers and peasants alike to an industrial discipline indistinguishable from that of capitalism, but it does so under conditions where the economic surplus is administered by a political bureaucracy responsible only to itself. This is where nationalism comes in, for the fusion of socialism with patriotism in the ideology of the radical intelligentsia and its successor, the state bureaucracy, is rendered plausible by the fact that industrial modernization appears as the precondition of national survival. A party which knows how to seize the leadership of this kind of national-revolutionary movement cannot in the long run be defeated, short of the physical destruction of the country inhabited by the population under its control.

This is not to say that such movements are bound to spring up everywhere. They may fail to emerge, in which case the society simply goes on stagnating at a pre-industrial level. This fate is probably in store for a number of undeveloped countries, a circumstance which lends an edge of desperation to their internal politics. There is no supra-historical law which decrees that all backward countries must witness a victorious revolution or some other break with traditional stagnation and poverty. They may fail and rot. What they cannot do is have it both ways: modernize without destroying their ancient pre-industrial customs and institutions. If this destruction is not undertaken by the Communist party, then it must be pushed through by some other agency willing and able to effect a radical break with the past. In the absence of such a rupture, the country can go on existing as a subsidiary part of some global system which one may term "imperial" if one is so minded; but it cannot raise itself to the level of the advanced industrial nations—capitalist or socialist. This is now fairly well understood. What is not always understood is the fact that in such an environment, and faced with such tasks, Communism—or Marxism-Leninism, to give it its official label—ceases to be the theory of anything worth being called a workers' movement. It becomes the ideology of an elitist avant-garde drawn from the intelligentsia.

THE ESSENTIALS of the matter are best understood if one abstracts from special cases such as Japan's successful modernization along capitalist lines in the later 19th and early 20th century. Some features of this experience are indeed of general interest. Thus anyone looking for evidence that national sovereignty is a precondition of successful all-round development need only compare Japan's brilliant record with India's miserable stagnation. The same applies to the usefulness of foreign investments. Japan managed very well without them, and indeed may have owed its economic salvation after 1870 to the fact that it succeeded in keeping them out. Nonetheless, it will not do to treat national sovereignty and economic protectionism as a sufficient explanation. They were essential preconditions, no more. The opportunity still had to be grasped. Here again there is no universal rule to be invoked. Europe, Asia, and Latin America are littered with independent nation-states which somehow missed the boat or—like Germany—committed national suicide despite a highly successful industrial and scientific development. There is no guarantee that modernization will produce political stability, democracy, socialism, or anything else. There is only the certainty that without economic development the society will reproduce all those super-structural features which rendered it poor and backward to begin with. This is particularly the case in regions where population

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presses on land and other national resources. A country like India, whose population is expected to double by the end of the century, is confronted with problems for which liberalism has no solution. Unless the peasant masses can be dragged out of their lethargy by a social revolution which breaks the stagnation of village life and frees them from their ancient superstitions, the prospect is one of increasing misery.[56]

India's economic problems cannot sensibly be discussed in abstraction from the wider issues of social conservatism, rural backwardness and ignorance, official incompetence, and political weakness at the center. But even in the narrowest economic terms it is evident that present policies have failed to break the vicious circle of poverty-stagnation-population-growth-increasing misery which has turned cities like Calcutta into cesspools and threatens to promote a gigantic catastrophe before the end of the century. In this context, foreign aid is a relatively minor topic—certainly when compared with the Congress party's failure since independence in 1947 to destroy the caste system, kill the cows, and get the exploding birth-rate under control. Quite clearly, such things can only be done by a dictatorship, and even a Communist dictatorship may shrink from them, in which case the Malthusian "solution" is likely to take the form of man-made famines on an enormous scale.

Stalin broke the Russian peasantry. The Indian peasantry is going to be harder to break and there is no Indian Stalin in sight. Nor would such an apparition necessarily be welcome even to Communists, most of whom would probably be liquidated by the *apparat* along with the peasants and their cows. It is only when one considers the liberal-democratic, or populist and pseudo-socialist, alternatives that the need for an "iron surgeon" begins to suggest itself. Populism—in practice meaning cottage industries and agricultural development, instead of lopsided emphasis on industry—could probably be made to work if it were not for the caste system and the population explosion. Laissez-faire under Indian conditions is merely a bad joke: in practice it resolves itself into waste production and the importation of useless luxury goods for a parasitic middle class of bureaucrats and non-entrepreneurs. Industrialization—even if its pace could be speeded up by a renovated state bureaucracy purged of parasites—would do nothing to raise the productivity of farm labor which is the precondition of everything else.

As for foreign aid, its net effect has been negligible, even though in the two decades after 1947 India received, in cash or in kind, the equivalent of $11 billion.[57] All of which confirms the gloomy analysis by professional economists like Myrdal and Heilbroner: either there is a politically directed breakthrough in the decisive sector, that of agriculture, or industrialization will get stuck. Nor can the breakthrough limit itself to tinkering with new crops. Unless the village population as a whole is dragged out of its customary way of life, increased productivity will only benefit a small minority of the better-off peasants at the expense of the remainder. The disruption of the ancient subsistence economy, and its replacement by a market-oriented network of commercial transactions, benefits only those who already possess enough initial capital to climb onto the ladder of "rising expectations" that liberal writers of the Galbraithian school never stop celebrating. Meanwhile, the rural proletariat is driven to the towns, where it forms huge agglomerations of stagnant misery. Insofar as Western aid speeds this process, it is counter-productive, for the effect is to promote a total rejection of the entire system. This is now happening over large areas of Asia and Latin America, and it is beginning to happen in Africa. Hence the identification of capitalism with imperialism still makes sense to intellectuals who wish to save the village community, or alternatively to use its disintegration for the purpose of unleashing a revolutionary movement against domestic and foreign exploiters.[58]

Some of the probable consequences of this process were perceived by the Communist International as early as the 1920's, when the Russian Revolution was deliberately projected as an alternative model of development. What ruined the parties directed by the Comintern was their obstinate attachment to the Leninist-Stalinist dogma that the revolutionary movement must take place under the leadership of the industrial working class, or anyway of a party based upon that class (though in practice independent of it by virtue of its centralized structure). It was only after the local Communists, or some of them, had got rid of this ludicrous *idée fixe* that they were able to make headway. By now the realization that only the intelligentsia can undertake a radical reorganization of society in backward countries is widely enough accepted, at any rate in practice, for Communist parties to have become effective competitors of their fascist rivals who otherwise would have had the field to themselves: as they did in Italy and Germany during the 1920's and 1930's, when the Communists heroically stuck to their archaic faith in the proletariat and were wiped out in consequence.

In this context it is important to note that leadership of Communist parties by intellectuals is not the main issue. Such leaderships existed even when the parties in question held slavishly to their belief in the "leading role" of the working class. The real break came when the intelligentsia as a group acquired an awareness of its own role and ceased to apologize for its existence. Once this had occurred, Communism could become the political faith of the only stratum capable of giv-

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ing political leadership to the masses in town and country. The "vanguard" concept helped to still uneasy consciences, since it was explained that the party acted as the spearhead of the mass movement, as indeed it did. The only trouble was that the extreme Right could likewise throw up a vanguard of classless intellectuals, committed to radical nationalism minus Marxism-Leninism. Then the only remaining question was which party stood a better chance of getting the national-revolutionary movement under way.

The probability of such an internal fissure arises from the nature of the anti-imperialist movement itself. Since in a backward country all classes of the population, with the exception of a thin oligarchic stratum and a few merchants, feel cheated and exploited by foreigners, it is fatally easy to work up a head of steam behind *any* nationalist movement that promises to end this state of affairs. Such movements may be, and quite often are, National-Socialist rather than Communist in orientation. Moreover, Communism is now itself split among Moscow-oriented parties which cling to the Leninist idea of a worker-peasant alliance, Maoist groups which aim at the poorer peasantry, Castroite preachers of guerrilla warfare, and Trotskyist believers in the industrial proletariat. The last-named can draw some encouragement from Syndicalist traditions in Western Europe and Latin America, but are unimportant elsewhere. All concerned operate with a questionable distinction between oligarchic allies of imperialism and a "national bourgeoisie" supposedly committed to industrialization and political independence. The distinction looks more satisfying on paper than in reality, where the "national bourgeoisie" commonly turns out to be either nonexistent or to consist of a handful of ideologues, in or out of uniform. The latter can with the greatest of ease be induced to style themselves socialists, much to the alarm of American investors unfamiliar with Saint-Simonism and unaware that "socialism" has become the universal faith of virtually all thinking people in poor countries.

The only constant element in all this flux is the appeal made by all the competing groups to the intelligentsia. In a sense this is also true of the situation in Western society, with the difference that here the central issue is not "development" but full employment. Moreover, an alliance between a mature industrial working class and the new technical intelligentsia, plus other white-collar groups, is something quite different from the typical populist symbiosis of an unemployed urban intelligentsia and an impoverished peasantry. It is only the latter combination that gives rise to the phenomenon of anti-imperialism in general and Maoism in particular, for it is only in poor and undeveloped countries that "socialism" can come to stand for resistance to foreign oppression and exploitation.[59]

ONE MAY legitimately dispute the Leninist argument that it is *only* monopolistic capitalism which holds back the all-round development of the Third World.[59] That it does so is undeniable, though there are other factors too on which Leninists prefer not to dwell—peasant conservatism, for instance, and the problem of accumulating capital within the agricultural sector for investment in industry. Stagnation was the normal condition of most cultures until the Industrial Revolution made its appearance. The real question is not whether capitalism exploits the undeveloped countries—of course it does, and always has—but why it has not done more to revolutionize them through the very mechanism of exploitation. We have already seen that Marx overrated the impact of British industry on India at the very peak of the free-trade era, long before monopolism made its appearance. Even then capital typically flowed to lands of European settlement—North America above all—while colonial investment went largely into a few extractive industries. The technological "spin-off" from such investments, plus railway building (Lenin's favorite yardstick) was insufficient to generate anything like a genuine breakthrough, if one excepts the case of Japan where there was no direct foreign investment, albeit plenty of indirect external pressure. In short, the pattern has not really changed in recent decades. Western society never did export the Industrial Revolution to genuinely backward areas, as distinct from lands of white European settlement. The old stagnant cultures were not revolutionized. If they did not pull themselves up by their own bootstraps in the Japanese fashion, they went on stagnating whether or not they were nominally independent.

Nor is there any good reason to believe that the Soviet model—which for practical purposes means the Stalinist model—can be successfully exported to the Third World. It is true that the Russian Communist party had to struggle with pre-capitalist social relations, and to that extent acquired an understanding of some problems which Russia shared with Asia. But Czarist Russia was already launched much further along the path of industrial development than any of the authentically poor countries in the undeveloped world, and the Russian autocracy supplied a ready-made instrument for Stalin's "revolution from above": the massive machinery of a state power which had survived the revolution practically unchanged and possessed long experience of dealing with workers and peasants. This bureaucracy could liquidate the peasant small-holder once it had been given orders to do so. It is unlikely that any other state machine could have smashed the peasantry as thoroughly as it did in the 1930's, herding the bulk into collectives and shipping all recalcitrant elements off to labor camps. It is even more unlikely that the Stalinist experience will be repeated in the genuinely poor countries.

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What may reasonably be expected is a growth of Maoist tendencies linked to an anti-imperialist ideology which identifies imperialism both with the West and with the Soviet Union. The likelihood of this happening arises from the growing disparity between development rates and expectations along the North-South axis which has begun to replace the East-West pattern of the cold war. The ideological counterpart of this split, as noted before, is the growth of populism. This may take a variety of forms—there is a fascist version of populism, which for a time was remarkably effective in Southern Europe and Latin America alike—but on the whole it seems probable that most national-revolutionary movements in the Third World will adopt Maoist variants of populism. The Leninist version is better adapted to the needs of urban workers and intellectuals who have already crossed the threshold of industrialization. For the same reason it is handicapped in competition with movements which openly bank upon the peasantry.

As noted before, all forms of populism have in common the belief that the ethnic community is essentially classless, or would be so were it not for domestic or foreign interference. Inasmuch as the impact of capitalism produces strains within an agrarian economy centered upon the small farmer, capitalism appears as the enemy of ethnic or tribal solidarity. This is the rationale of African socialism and similarly structured movements in the Third World. While clearly unscientific, such beliefs express a felt loyalty to the ethnic community which may be labeled "nationalism" or "socialism," whichever term one prefers. The point is that populists experience their faith as an adherence to ancestral values *and* as a protest against the disintegration typically entailed by the capitalist form of modernization. In consequence, nationalism tends to be identified by them with socialism, anti-capitalism with anti-imperialism. This sentiment comes about quite spontaneously as a response to the dislocation of the primitive community. Since the West is generally seen as the prime agent of this disintegration, populism normally assumes an anti-Western slant; and since it can plausibly be held that Western capital holds back the all-round development of backward countries in the interest of corporate monopolies, the anti-imperialist line of reasoning can likewise be adopted by groups or parties which are in effect committed to radical modernization and the destruction of the ancient ethnic solidarity of the community or the clan. Populist socialism kills two birds with one stone. It casts itself in the role of defender of the ancient classless community before the coming of capitalism, and it also blames imperialist monopoly capital for holding up the process of development which—if it were to take place—would explode the myth of classlessness. Hence it is a waste of time arguing with populists. They are typically able to hold contradictory beliefs with complete sincerity, and since in their terminology "the people" equals "the proletariat," no one is ever going to argue them out of their conviction that nationalism and socialism are identical.[60]

THE COMBINATION of agrarian populism and radical nationalism makes up the sum and substance of the faith generally known as Maoism. From being in its origins connected with the Leninist version of Marxism, it has developed into a creed adapted to the reality of pre-capitalist societies which had never known genuine class conflict and are currently exposed to the impact of industrialization in its Western (capitalist) or Eastern (state socialist) form. These societies are overwhelmingly poor and equally overwhelmingly agrarian. In their majority they are separated from the West, and from the Soviet Union, by racial as well as by socio-economic cleavages and antagonisms. Since they are not riven by class antagonism in the form experienced by all advanced industrial countries, they experience the stresses of industrialization as a challenge to the whole community assembled around the infallible party or the infallible leader. The resulting political system corresponds to the expectations of some 19th-century Russian *narodniki* rather than to anything anticipated by the Marxists. It is perfectly viable until it is disintegrated by the very modernization process which the party intends to control. Liberalism and Marxism are equally beyond the horizon of individuals living within a structure of this kind. For the same reason, nothing that the U.S. or the USSR says or does is likely to have the smallest impact upon the minds of people committed to the belief that the self-emancipation of the peasantry will bring socialism in its train.

In the ideology of Maoism, China figures as a "proletarian nation" menaced by Western imperialism and Soviet "social imperialism" alike. The idea of the "proletarian nation" was originally worked out by the Italian fascists, and by their Syndicalist predecessors before 1914, to account for Italy's poverty. It was abandoned when fascism had failed and Italy had ceased to be poor. Conceivably a time will come when China feels able to get on without Maoism, but the industrialization of so vast and poverty-stricken a country is not comparable to the stresses undergone by any European nation, nor was nuclear war then a possibility on the horizon. The scale on which events have shaped themselves has dwarfed the dimensions of what in Leninist parlance still figures as the age of imperialism. It is not only the capitalist nexus that threatens to involve mankind in global war. The transformation of Asia, by whatever means undertaken, must alter the world balance of power, and experience suggests that major shifts of this kind are rarely if ever accomplished peacefully.

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Notes

1. For the theoretical background of such utterances, see Paul E. Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* (Monthly Review Press, 1957), *passim;* Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital* (Monthly Review Press, 1966; Penguin Books, 1968), *passim;* Harry Magdoff, *The Age of Imperialism: The Economics of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Monthly Review Press, 1966, 1968), *passim.*
2. For a new edition, see V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works* (Progress Publishers, 1967), vol. 1, pp. 675 ff. The pamphlet was passed by the Czarist censor in 1916 and printed legally before the February Revolution of 1917. The preface dated "Petrograd, April 26, 1917" draws attention to this fact, and also asks the reader to "substitute Russia for Japan, and Finland, Poland, Courland, the Ukraine, Khiva, Bokhara, Estonia, or other regions peopled by non-Great Russians, for Korea"—Japan's annexation of Korea having been mentioned in the text as an example of imperialist annexation, so as not to alarm the censor. Mention of the Ukraine must have set some readers wondering about the relevance of Lenin's analysis of modern monopoly capitalism to earlier and more primitive forms of territorial annexation. For Rosa Luxemburg's theory of imperialism, see *The Accumulation of Capital* (Routledge, 1951), with an Introduction by Joan Robinson. For the general theme see, among others, Paul M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (Oxford University Press, 1942; Dennis Dobson, 1946, 1949), pp. 190 ff., 202 ff., 254 ff. There is no point in going into Rosa Luxemburg's theory, since Lenin paid no attention to it, basing himself instead on J. A. Hobson and on Rudolf Hilferding's great work *Das Finanzkapital* (Vienna, 1910; Moscow, 1912). See also N. Bukharin, *Der Imperialismus und die Akkumulation des Kapitals* (Verlag für Literatur und Politik, 1926).
3. J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (first published in 1902; revised edition, Allen & Unwin, 1948), p. 106.
4. Lenin, op. cit., p. 742.
5. Ibid., pp. 768 ff.
6. Ibid., p. 770.
7. Ibid., p. 740.
8. Lenin, "The War and Russian Social-Democracy," first published on November 1, 1914, in *Sotsial-Democrat* No. 33; reprinted in *Selected Works,* vol. I, pp. 657 ff; see also *Collected Works,* vol. XXI. The article concludes with the words: "Long live the international fraternity of the workers against the chauvinism and patriotism of the bourgeoisie of all countries! Long live a proletarian International, freed from opportunism!" No mention of the peasantry, then as ever the principal reservoir of "bourgeois" patriotism.
9. *Selected Works,* vol. I, p. 679.
10. Ibid., p. 680.
11. Marx-Engels, *Werke* (East Berlin, 1962, 1963), vol 17, pp. 271 ff.; vol. 22, pp. 30 ff. See in particular Engels's detailed forecast in the article he published in Kautsky's *Neue Zeit* of May 1890 where he wrote: "The German annexation turns France into Russia's ally against Germany, the Czarist threat to Constantinople turns Austria, even Italy, into allies of Germany. Both sides prepare themselves for a decisive struggle, a war such as the world has never seen, a war in which ten or fifteen million combatants will oppose each other in arms. Only two factors have until now prevented the outbreak of this terrible conflict: the unprecedented progress in arms technology, which supersedes every new rifle model by new inventions before even one army can introduce it; and secondly, the absolute incalculability of the chances, the total uncertainty as to who will finally emerge victorious from this gigantic struggle. This whole danger of world war will disappear on the day when a change of affairs in Russia enables the Russian people to terminate the traditional annexationist policy of its Czars, and to concern itself with its own highly endangered vital interests, instead of pursuing fantasies of world domination." Loc. cit., p. 45.
12. Lenin, op. cit., pp. 680-81.
13. Ibid., p. 683.
14. Lenin, "Better fewer, but better," in *Selected Works,* vol. III, p. 785. See also *Collected Works,* vol. XXXIII.
15. For documentation on the later and more dramatic phase of the Sino-Soviet dispute, see the special issue of *Studies in Comparative Communism* (University of Southern California, July-October 1969); for the historical and theoretical background see Hélène Carrère d'Encausse and Stuart R. Schram, *Marxism and Asia* (Allen Lane, 1969), especially pp. 317 ff. Also Stuart R. Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (first edition, Praeger, 1963; revised edition, Penguin Books, 1969). The dichotomy of socialism-imperialism, with the Soviet Union and the Communist movement representing the former, is particularly marked in such utterances as Mao's congratulatory oration "Stalin is our commander," originally a birthday tribute in December 1939, but still published a decade later after the Chinese revolution had carried the Communist party to power. See Schram, op. cit., pp. 426-27: "On the one side is imperialism which represents the front of the oppressors. On the other side is socialism, which represents the front of resistance to oppression." For all its naiveté, this formulation was still rooted in that aspect of the Leninist inheritance which enabled Mao to identify nationalism with anti-imperialism, and both with socialism. In 1939 Stalin was hailed as "the savior of all the oppressed." Three decades later his heirs in the Kremlin had come to rank as imperialists and allies of the United States.
16. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development,* p. 329.
17. Ibid., p. 333.
18. Hobson, op. cit., pp. 81-83.
19. Michael Barratt Brown, *After Imperialism* (Heinemann, 1963), p. 96. This argument cannot be countered by dwelling on the super-profits of oil monopolies and capitalist investments in mines or plantations. Hobson had quite specifically asserted that the economic drive behind imperialism was the relative shrinkage of domestic markets for consumer goods. The implication was that such markets could be built up in the dependent tropical empire, whereas in fact they existed and expanded in the white-settler "dominions" which also became a major outlet for British capital investment.
20. Ibid., p. 101; see also p. 99: "It is true that by 1913 nearly a tenth of the national income was accounted for by payments received from overseas investments . . . and this formed perhaps a quarter of all property incomes. Only about a sixth of this could, however, be said to come from India and the other dependent colonies; the very much greater part came . . . from the other developing industrial lands, the United States, European countries, and the independent British dominions."
21. Ibid., p. 121.
22. Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War: Allied Diplomacy and the World Crisis of 1943-1945* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969), pp. 242 ff., 280 ff. This learned work is more useful for its assessment of U.S. economic policy than for its rather uncertain treatment of European affairs, a topic that demands a different approach. Where Kolko scores is in analyzing the Anglo-American relationship, which was one of fundamental rivalry overlaid by the necessities of wartime cooperation: in this respect resembling the Anglo-Dutch alliance of an earlier era, with the weaker partner inevitably winding up in the role of satellite.
23. See Jonathan Steinberg, "The Kaiser's Navy and German

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Society," *Past and Present* No. 28, July 1964, p. 103: "The first, and most disagreeable, of these insights for German historians must be that the imperial Navy failed to accomplish its objectives in war; the second that it contributed more than any other German organization to the disruption of the peace before 1914; the third that both its failure in war and its behavior in peace reflected the values, attitudes, and ideas of the German middle class, the class to which the great majority of historians belong." In fact, the whole enterprise was largely irrational and promoted by Pan-German fantasies which had seized hold of the German middle class in the Bismarck era, and were then taken up and promoted by Wilhelm II and his advisers as a means of providing the monarchy with a popular following. See Harmut Pogge von Strandmann, "Domestic Origins of Germany's Colonial Expansion under Bismarck," *Past and Present* No. 42, February 1969, pp. 140 ff. Similar considerations apply to the frequently irrational, not to say lunatic, behavior of the Japanese military and naval leaders between 1931 and 1941.

24. Luxemburg, op. cit., p. 387.
25. Ibid., p. 419.
26. Ibid., p. 446; see also the note on Schmoller on pp. 295-96.
27. See J. A. Schumpeter, "John Maynard Keynes," in *Ten Great Economists: From Marx to Keynes* (Allen & Unwin, 1952). For the standard liberal treatment of the topic, see Robert Lekachman, *The Age of Keynes* (Random House, 1967). The author does not fail to note that the age of Keynes was also the age of Lytton Strachey, but it is possible to feel that he gives insufficient weight to the fact. See also Lekachman, ed., *Keynes and the Classics* (D. C. Heath, 1964); Michael Stewart, *Keynes and After* (Penguin, 1967).
28. First published under the title *"Zur Soziologie der Imperialismen"* in vol. 46 of the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* in 1919, issued in book form the same year, and now available in an English translation, in P.M. Sweezy, ed., *Imperialism and Social Classes* (Blackwell, 1951), together with a later essay on social classes, likewise published in the *Archiv* (vol. 57, 1927) of which Schumpeter had by then become an editor. The theme of the second essay had been outlined by Schumpeter as early as 1910-11, and was later presented by him at Columbia University in lecture form in 1913-14. Both essays can be regarded as contributions to a discussion which, in Austria anyway, had been initiated by the Marxist school, whereas in Britain it dated back to the Boer War of 1899-1902, Chamberlain's protectionist campaign, and Hobson's restatement of classical liberalism.
29. "Imperialism and Capitalism," in *Imperialism and Social Classes*, pp. 122-28.
30. Ibid., p. 99.
31. Ibid., p. 101.
32. Ibid., p. 100.
33. Ibid., p. 104.
34. Ibid., p. 105.
35. Ibid., p. 84.
36. Ibid., p. 115.
37. F. L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (Batsford, 1967), *passim*.
38. For a brief discussion of this topic, see Paul M. Sweezy, "Obstacles to Economic Development," in *Socialism, Capitalism and Economic Growth: Essays presented to Maurice Dobb*, C. H. Feinstein, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 191-97; also Paul A. Baran and P. M. Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital;* P. A. Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth;* H. Magdoff, *The Age of Imperialism;* Peter Worsley, *The Third World* (University of Chicago Press, 1964). For liberal and Fabian discussions of the topic, see W. Arthur Lewis, *The Theory of Economic Growth* (Unwin University Books, 1963); Hla Myint, *The Economics of the Developing Countries* (Praeger, 1965); Gunnar Myrdal, *Challenge to Affluence* (Vintage Books, 1965); *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, 3 vols. (Pantheon, 1968); *International Economy* (Harper & Row, 1956); Thomas Balogh, *The Economics of Poverty* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1955-66). For a Trotskyist analysis, see Michael Kidron, *Western Capitalism Since the War* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968). Earlier academic writings worth consulting include K. Mandelbaum, *The Industrialization of Backward Areas* (Blackwell, 1945) and the collection of essays entitled *The Progress of Underdeveloped Areas*, B. F. Hoselitz, ed. (University of Chicago Press, 1952).
39. E.g., W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth* (Cambridge University Press, 1960); for a Fabian contribution to post-Imperial British writing, see John Strachey, *The End of Empire* (Gollancz, 1959).
40. Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, ch. 15 (cited after the Moscow 1959 edition, p. 245).
41. "Future Results of British Rule in India," first published in the New York *Daily Tribune*, August 8, 1853; see S. Avineri, ed., *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization*, p. 125. In the same article, the introduction of private property in land is described as "the great desideratum of Asiatic society."
42. Ibid., pp. 127-130.
43. Ibid., p. 131.
44. A. M. MacBriar, *Fabian Socialism and English Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1962, 1966), pp. 119 ff; Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social Imperialist Thought, 1895-1914* (Allen & Unwin, 1960), pp. 128 ff., 166 ff., 234 ff.
45. Barratt Brown, op. cit., p. 65.
46. Ibid., p. 71.
47. Ibid., p. 206.
48. For background, see Tang Tsou, *America's Failure in China 1941-50*, vol. 2 (University of Chicago Press, 1963). The author makes the interesting point (p. 478) that the China Aid Act of April 1948, which was supposed to put the moribund Chiang Kai-shek government on its feet, "brought about the most widespread and outspoken anti-American movement up to that time. This anti-American sentiment originated in the commonly held belief that Chiang was leading the country to ruin and that he could not do so without American support." Nationalist and populist sentiments of this kind flowed into Maoist channels for reasons having very little to do with class conflict, as that term is understood by Marxists.
49. Baran, op. cit., pp. 151 ff.
50. Magdoff, op. cit., p. 197.
51. Ibid. Magdoff also has a subsidiary line of reasoning which relies upon the financial drain imposed by foreign investment; see p. 198: between 1950 and 1965 the flow of direct investment from the U.S. to Latin America totalled only $3.8 billion, whereas income on capital transferred to the United States came to $11.3 billion, a surplus of $7.5 billion in favor of the U.S. The corresponding figures for Europe are $8.1 billion in U.S. investment and a mere $5.5 billion in profits transferred back. The implication is that Western Europe on balance gained from American investment, whereas Latin America was a net loser. Profit rates were in fact higher in Latin America (and in the Middle East) because investments were concentrated in oil and certain minerals, and because production costs were lower than in Europe. But this merely underscores the familiar fact that "uneven development" is a source of surplus profit for the advanced countries (including the USSR). It does not prove that no development takes place, merely than an extra price is paid for it during the critical transition period. If it be argued that development is permanently confined to a few extractive industries, then the countries in question cannot become important markets for U.S. exports. Yet the stagnation-via-monopoly thesis makes no sense unless it implies that foreign

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markets—as well as raw material sources—are needed to keep the system in balance.

52. Arms expenditure as an economic stabilizer is invoked by Kidron, *Western Capitalism Since the War*, pp. 38 ff. There are of course empirical grounds for stating that this kind of waste production is less bothersome from the standpoint of business corporations than public outlay on products (e.g., houses) that appear in the market and compete with private industry. But arms still have to be paid for out of taxes, and unproductive expenditure undertaken for political purposes—social stability, or defense against presumed foreign enemies—reduces the profitability of normal investments in the private sector. In a wholly state-controlled economy such as that of the USSR, the basic irrationality of arms expenditure—or space exploration, for that matter—translates itself immediately into a lower growth rate. Under capitalism the same result is achieved in a roundabout way, through inflation and the growth of the national debt.
53. Ibid., p. 25.
54. Robert L. Heilbroner, "Counterrevolutionary America," in Irving Howe, ed., *A Dissenter's Guide to Foreign Policy* (Anchor Books, 1968), pp. 254-55. The author notes that "the total consumption of energy of all kinds [in terms of coal equivalent] for Afghanistan, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Ceylon, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Korea, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, the UAR, Uruguay, and Venezeula is less than that annually consumed by West Germany alone" (p. 254).
55. See Barratt Brown, op. cit., p. 369: "Canada has become the one land to be industrialized with United States capital, but with the result that at least a third of Canada's industry is now owned by United States companies."
56. Gunnar Myrdal, "Economic Development in the Backward Countries," in Howe, ed., *A Dissenter's Guide*, pp. 195 ff.
57. Herbert Feldman, "Aid as Imperialism?," *International Affairs* (Chatham House, April 1967, vol. 43, no. 2). What is true of India applies in most respects also to Pakistan, where in 1966 the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry complained that the country's industry was "heavily dependent on imports," and that foreign "aid" was mostly designed to provide a lucrative market for the donor countries. The problem is common to all developing countries, dependent and independent alike. This is just why it still makes sense to speak of "imperialism"—provided one does not restrict the use of the term to one side in the cold war.
58. The pacifist variant supplies the rationale of Indian populist socialism. See Asoka Mehta, "Can India Industrialize Democratically?" (*Dissent*, Spring and Summer issues, 1955; reprinted in *Voices of Dissent*, Grove Press, 1958, pp. 253 ff.): "In the peasant sector of the economy, land distribution, village-oriented economy and voluntary labor for rural public works would provide opportunities for full employment. In handicrafts, better tools, adequate raw materials, cooperatives for credit and marketing, and protection against developed industries would provide increased and secure employment." All very well if it were not for the time factor, the swelling numbers of rural unemployed, and the impossibility of effecting land distribution on a really impressive scale under a political system which privileges the landlord and the money-lender. For the political consequences, see M. Watnick, "The Appeal of Communism to the Underdeveloped Peoples," in Hoselitz, ed., *The Progress of Underdeveloped Areas*.
59. For a brief exposition of this thesis, see Oskar Lange, *Economic Development, Planning, and International Cooperation*. (Monthly Review Press, 1963).
60. Nigel Harris, *Beliefs in Society* (C. A. Watts, 1968), pp. 186 ff.

Corrections

The following is a list of corrections of errors which occurred in Part I of this essay (April):

Page 47, column 1, line 46: for "uncouth Greeks" read "uncouth Germans."

Page 65, column 1, line 36: for "power processess" read "newer processes."

Page 65, column 3, lines 32 and 33: for "The world economy was policed by British capital exports" read ". . . policed by the British navy and fed by British capital exports."

Page 70, column 1, line 25: for "a coming slowdown" read "a coming showdown."

Page 70, column 2, line 28: for "course" read "cause."

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Translating the Bible

David Daiches

"THE ENGLISH translation of the Bible," remarked the 17-century antiquary John Selden, "is the best translation in the world, and renders the sense of the original best. . . . The translation in King James's time took an excellent way. That part of the Bible was given to him who was most excellent in such a tongue (as the Apocrypha to Andrew Downes) and then they met together, and one read the translation the rest holding in their hand some Bible either of the learned tongues or French, Spanish, Italian, etc.: if they found any fault they spake; if not, he read on."

Selden was talking about the King James or Authorized Version (AV) of 1611, one of the glories of English literature as well as a work of remarkable scholarship. But scholarship advances, new knowledge corrects old, and stylistic habits become antiquated. In May 1946 a group of Scottish churchmen recommended "that a translation of the Bible be made in the language of the present day, inasmuch as the language of the Authorized Version, already archaic when it was made, had now become even more definitely archaic and less generally understood." The ultimate result of this was the New English Bible, the combined work of British scholars of many different Christian denominations, of which the New Testament was published in 1961 and the Old Testament and Apocrypha are now published (together with the New Testament in a single volume).*

The translators of the New English Bible (NEB) worked in a way not dissimilar to that of the AV translators. We can compare with Selden's account the account given in the preface to NEB: "The translating panels adopted the following procedure. An individual was invited to submit a draft translation of a particular book, or group of books. Normally he would be a member of the panel concerned. Very occasionally a draft translation was invited from a scholar outside the panel, who was known to have worked specially on the book in question. The draft was circulated in typescript to members of the panel for their consideration. They then met together and discussed the draft round a table, verse by verse, sentence by sentence. Each member brought his view about the meaning of the original to the judgment of his fellows, and discussion went on until they reached a common mind."

But there was one important difference between the AV translators and those of NEB. The latter, one might almost say, added the style later. "The resultant draft," their preface continues, "was now remitted to the panel of literary advisers. They scrutinized it, once again, verse by verse, sentence by sentence, and took pains to secure, as best they could, the tone and level of language appropriate to the different kinds of writing to be found in the Bible." This curious assembly-line procedure, with the scholars doing their bit and then passing the product on to the stylists, is a startling illustration of the progress of specialization in humanistic studies since 1611. The procedure was probably necessary: the striking differences in literary quality among different books of the Anchor Bible show that while some experts in the meaning of the original languages of the Bible have the gift of embodying their knowledge in lucid, vigorous, and idiomatic English (the late E. A. Speiser's *Genesis* is a case in point), others do not. Further, in deliberately abandoning the tradition of English biblical prose that began with William Tyndale in 1525, and committing themselves to "the language of the present day," the NEB translators posed a dilemma for themselves, for a considerable amount of the material in the Bible had its source in an outlook and a view of the nature of language wholly unlike anything in the present day; and the literary experts were required to help resolve this dilemma.

The dilemma was not, of course, wholly resolved, and in the nature of things could not be. Quite apart from differences in sensibility and *Weltanschauung* between the original authors of the Bible and ourselves—not to mention lesser but often significant differences among some of those original authors themselves, for the Bible is a whole library of books produced over a period of over a thousand years—biblical Hebrew and New Testament Greek pose some pretty intractable problems for the translator into modern English. These problems can be in some degree resolved if everything can be subsumed in a traditional liturgical English style. Such a style emerged in England in the 16th century, and the NEB translators are quite right in claiming that the lan-

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* *The New English Bible, with the Apocrypha,* Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press. Old Testament, 1166 pp.; Apocrypha, 275 pp.; New Testament, 336 pp. $9.95.

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guage of AV was archaic even in its own day. But though archaic it was not dead: it was a living language, the accustomed language of religious discourse, accepted and constantly used as such. AV was itself a revision of the preceding English version and deliberately retained the traditional biblical style that had been established by earlier translators. NEB is an entirely new translation, implicitly offered as the Authorized Version of our time. Its aim is to express to the modern reader what the Bible *means* in language that is clear, accurate, and contemporary.

But the phrase "what the Bible means" can itself mean different things. In some cases, for example, where there has been a long oral tradition before a story surfaced into writing, what a story originally meant had already changed significantly by the time it was put into the form now available to us. Theodor Gaster's *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament*, which I discussed in these columns,* provides abundant evidence for that. Parts of the Bible have meant different things to different people at different stages of its development, and different things again to members of different religions and sects in the centuries since the canon was established. In some cases there is really no such thing as an "original" meaning of a biblical phrase. "In the beginning God created the Heaven, and the Earth" is the opening of the Bible in the King James version of 1611, and it has been followed by many other translations since. In terms of strict philology, this is not what this phrase "means." Speiser renders it: "When God set about to create heaven and earth. . . ." NEB has: "In the beginning of creation, when God made heaven and earth, . . ." thus recognizing, as does Speiser, that the Hebrew word *bereshit* is in the "construct" form, meaning "in the beginning of." But then again, what sort of a beginning is it? Monsignor Ronald Knox, in his highly literary translation from the Vulgate text, renders this first sentence of Genesis as "God, at the beginning of time, created heaven and earth"; but the Latin *in principio*, which he is here translating, might conceivably mean (in terms of the etymology of *principium*) something like "in the first place," "as a matter of fundamental importance." It is interesting that the Hebrew word translated as "beginning," like the Latin *principium*, derives from a root meaning "head" or "chief," whereas the Aramaic translation, the Targum, renders *bereshit* as *bekadmin*, which really does have a predominantly temporal sense. Clearly, by the time the Aramaic translation was made, *bereshit* was taken to mean "in the (chronological) beginning." The Hebrew equivalent of the Aramaic *kadmin* is *kedem* (as in *chadesh yamenu kekedem*, "renew our days as of old"), but no such word is found in the opening of the Hebrew book of Genesis.

* "Biblical Legends," October 1969.

ONE CAN, of course, play games forever with single words, and such games have enormous fascination. But my point is a serious one. The Bible—the Old Testament, at any rate—is a stratified work, consisting of many layers each of which may represent a different kind of "meaning." Parts of it were already regarded, by those who put the books into the form we know, as antique, and written in an antique style. The extraordinary song of triumph and revenge which Lamech sings to his wives in Genesis 4:23 is a primitive song that stands out from its context in both language and rhythms: surely it requires translating into a highly stylized and archaic English. Similarly, the Song of Moses in Exodus 15 stands out in the Hebrew as written in a different kind of language from its context, and the translator should make some attempt to "distance" it by style. The NEB translators do not attempt to do this; it is in fact no part of their intention. Though they do attempt to produce "the tone and level of language appropriate to the different kinds of writing to be found in the Bible," they never allow any deviation from the language of the present day. So in NEB Moses sings:

I will sing to the Lord, for he has risen up in triumph;
The horse and his rider he has hurled into the sea.
The Lord is my refuge and my defense,
he has shown himself my deliverer.
He is my God, and I will glorify him;
he is my father's God, and I will exalt him.

This is not significantly different from AV:

I will sing unto the Lord: for he hath triumphed gloriously,
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the Sea.
The Lord is my strength and song,
And he is become my salvation:
He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation,
My father's God, and I will exalt him.

There are only two really different readings: the puzzling *zimrat* is rendered "defense," not "song," on calculated philological grounds, and similarly the difficult *anvehu* is rendered "I will glorify him" and not "I will prepare him an habitation" (where the word is connected with *naveh*, "habitation," as in the Targum and suggested by Rashi). "Hath" becomes "has" to avoid archaism. But shouldn't this stanza be archaic, as it doubtless was to the original redactor? An even clearer case is the Song of Deborah in Judges 5:2-31. This is one of the oldest parts of the Old Testament, an ancient song transmitted orally for generations until it was written down, in a text certainly corrupt in parts, by a redactor to whom it was clearly an archaic poem. The NEB translators manage to capture something of its rhythms, but the lan-

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guage is duly *gleichgeschaltet*, turned, like everything else, into "the language of the present day."

Of course the actual contents of the Bible impose differences of style on the translation: different kinds of narrative, song, prophetic verse, and gnomic utterance are made quite clear. But something is lost in being consistently modern, just as something was lost in AV by being consistently "biblical." The AV translators found many different kinds of liturgical biblical style to correspond to the differences in the original, but they had no sense of differences in strata. The NEB translators certainly had such a sense, but out of policy refrained from embodying it in their language. In some ways scholarship makes for uniformity. If we recover what we think some ancient fragment really means, we are tempted to render it in very non-ancient language in order to demonstrate how completely we understand it. But suppose the sense of ancient-ness is part of the meaning? It couldn't be part of the *original* meaning, it may be argued; its first author must have written in a language that was modern to him. There are two answers to this: one, even if he did, his work may have been included in the work we have as a deliberate example of an older or a more formal style (like the *Battle of Maldon* in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*); and two, an author may have deliberately written in an antique formal style for ritual or other cultural purposes. Homeric Greek was antique to the redactor of the Homeric poems, and the best way to render in English the way it sounded to the classical Greeks who read it (and perhaps even to those who first heard it orally recited) is more like the now despised translations of Butcher and Lang, and Lang, Leaf, and Myers than like those of W. H. D. Rouse.

Another example of an inset song which comes from a different stratum is David's lament over Jonathan in II Samuel 1. We are all familiar with the opening of the King James version:

> The beauty of Israel is slaine upon thy high places:
> How are the mightie fallen!

NEB renders these lines:

> O prince of Israel, laid low in death!
> How are the men of war fallen!

The difference here is philological rather than stylistic. *Tsvi* means ornament or splendor; but it is also the word for a gazelle or hart, itself a symbol of strength and beauty and therefore possibly meaning something like "noble warrior" in some ancient Semitic languages: hence the rather dubious rendering, "prince." "Slaine upon thy high places" is rendered "laid low in death" by a simple emendation; "mightie" becomes "men of war," presumably because it is considered a more accurate rendering of *giborim*, but the difference here is one of emphasis rather than of meaning. When NEB comes to translate the identical Hebrew phrase, when it is repeated at the end of the song, the rendering is different:

> Fallen, fallen are the men of war.

Presumably, a high elegaic note was felt necessary here, though it was not found necessary in rendering the phrase the first time. The final verse is, in fact, rather effective:

> Fallen, fallen are the men of war;
> and their armour left on the field.

This is less rhetorical, but more quietly moving, than King James:

> How are the mightie fallen,
> And the weapons of warre perished!

I suspect that one of NEB's "literary advisers" thought up that "fallen, fallen"; it is a deliberate sacrifice of literal accuracy to style. But it is an isolated, if by itself successful, stylistic maneuver. It does violence to the structural effect of having the same exclamatory phrase at the beginning of the poem, in the penultimate stanza (if we accept NEB's formal arrangement), and in the coda. And its Victorian elegiac tone does not suggest the incorporation of a genuine ancient lament into a historical narrative. I come back to this question of strata or layers in so many of the books of the Old Testament: they represent the great unaccepted challenge to translators.

TRANSLATORS have their easiest time with straight narrative in a simple folk idiom, such as the superb story of Joseph, most of which is attributed to the hand that scholars call *J*. The style here is simple, eloquent, and uniform; there are no inserted older layers; and though the language can move from the primitive "and then . . . and then" sequential narrative to the eloquence of Judah's final plea before Joseph (Genesis 44:18-34), the voice of the narrator is the same voice. All the translator has to do is to render the Hebrew in an unpretentious, straightforward way. The AV translators did so, but in language consciously archaic, so that we have the feeling of reading an ancient folktale. But it comes out at least as well in a simple modern English, for this is really a timeless style.

Here is the opening of the story in the language of AV (Genesis 37:2-5):

> Ioseph being seventeene yeeres old, was feeding the flocke with his brethren, and the lad was with the sonnes of Bilhah, and with the sonnes of Zilpah, his fathers wives: and Ioseph brought unto his father their evill report. Now Israel loved Ioseph more than all his children, because he was the sonne of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more then all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speake peacably unto him.

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And here is NEB:

> When Joseph was a boy of seventeen, he used to accompany his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives, when they were in charge of the flock; and he brought their father a bad report of them. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was a child of his old age, and he made him a long, sleeved robe. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any other of them, they hated him and could not say a kind word to him.

Let us add, for comparison, Speiser's translation in the Anchor Bible Genesis:

> At seventeen years of age, Joseph tended flocks with his brothers. He was assisting the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah; and Joseph brought his father bad reports about them.
>
> Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, for he was the child of his old age; and he made him an ornamented tunic. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of his other sons [the Masoretic text has "brothers" here, but some manuscripts, as well as the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint, read "other sons"], they came to hate him so much that they could not say a kind word to him.

The folk tone comes through equally well in each version. The stylistic differences among the versions are largely the result of different ways of coping with the paucity of conjunctions in Hebrew. Enormous use is made of the simple prefix *ve-*, usually translated "and" but in fact capable of meaning "but" or "however" or "now" or "then." A great deal of tact is necessary in handling this simple little syllable. That, and (used much less often) *ki*, "for," "because," carry the nuances of the narrative. The moving simplicity of verse 3 is achieved largely by the bare transitions from *ve* to *ki* and back to *ve*. And Israel loved Joseph best *because* he was the son of his old age *and* he made him a special kind of coat. The simple logic of an elderly widower's emotions (we remember that Rachel, Joseph's mother, died in giving birth to Joseph's younger brother Benjamin—an important fact in the structure of the story as a whole) is in that movement of conjunctions.

It is interesting that the translators of all the three versions quoted above render the first *ve* of this sentence as "now." It is not so much a poverty in Hebrew vocabulary that requires this simple prefix to be translated in many different ways; it is rather the flexibility of the prefix itself. In this respect Hebrew is very unlike Greek, which abounds in particles that define with remarkable precision the logical relationship between one clause and the next and thus pose an impossible problem for the translator in rendering their meaning accurately and idiomatically into a language that has no such profusion of particles. *Men* and *de* are relatively easy, but all those other enclitic particles in Greek—*te*, *ge* and their like—and such conjunctions as *oun*, *alla* (and *all' oun*), *gar*, evidence a sense of logical relationship between clauses and sentences that Hebrew does not possess. In Hebrew the basic relationship (at least in stories of the Joseph type) is temporal; a sequence is likely to be a consequence. Jacob loved Joseph best *and* he made him a special coat is in Hebrew almost the same as saying that Jacob loved Joseph best *therefore* he made him a special coat. Time unfolds purpose, which is implicit in action. In ancient Hebrew thought this applies to characters in stories and in history as it applies to God.

Monsignor Knox, in his remarkable translation from the Vulgate, deliberately moves away from the syntactical simplicity of the Hebrew (from which he is not translating directly) to provide sophisticated links between clauses and sentences which give a quite different rhythm to this prose and a tone that is very unlike that of the simple folktale that we have in the original:

> By now, Joseph was sixteen years old, and helped his brethren to feed their flocks, young though he was. He worked with the sons of his father's wives, Bala and Zelpha; and against these brothers of his he told his father ill tales. Among his children, Jacob loved Joseph best, as old men love the sons old age has brought them; and he dressed him in a coat that was all embroidery.

Phrases such as "by now," "young though he was," "as old men love the sons old age has brought them" provide a very modern touch—not modern in the sense that the NEB translators were trying to be modern, but modern in the sense that this use of temporal, concessive, and explanatory clauses does not belong to primitive narrative and represents a kind of narrative prose that develops late in any culture.

THE PAUCITY of conjunctions in biblical Hebrew is paralleled by the paucity of exclamations. Exclamations of grief in Hebrew cannot compare with the luxuriant cries of woe which fill Greek tragedy. When Jacob thinks that his favorite son has been killed, he does not break out into a string of wild ejaculations. The moving restraint of the Hebrew comes out equally well in AV and in NEB:

> And all his sonnes, and all his daughters rose up to comfort him: but he refused to be comforted: and he said, For I will goe downe into the grave unto my sonne, mourning: thus his father wept for him.
>
> His sons and daughters all tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. He said, "I will go to my grave mourning for my son." Thus Joseph's father wept for him.

The style of the original is proof against distor-

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tion by any reasonably literal rendering: the Joseph story is indeed, from the point of view of translation, as near foolproof as anything in the Bible. Only Monsignor Knox, who translates Old Testament narrative, with great skill, in the style of George Moore in *The Brook Kerith,* has deliberately thrown away the advantages of the simplicity of the Hebrew; but that is because he translates from the Latin, and the Vulgate Latin is curiously dull and deadpan in its handling of narrative, thus in some degree justifying Monsignor's Knox's treatment of it.

The exclamations used by the writer of the Joseph story are virtually limited to two—*hineh* ("behold") and *na* ("I pray you")—with the former by far the more numerous. They must be translated differently in different circumstances, and at no point in the Joseph story should *hineh* be rendered by the traditional "behold." Consider the way these two words are used in those verses in which Joseph excitedly tells of his dreams. He says to his brothers: *shimu-na hachalom hazeh asher chalamti,* which AV renders "Heare, I pray you, this dreame which I have dreamed." NEB renders, more simply and directly and very effectively: "Listen to this dream I have had." But in omitting altogether the force of the *na,* NEB loses something. Its function here (though of course not universally) is to convey excitement, almost like, "Hey! Listen to this dream I've had."

The function of *hineh* in this section is similar. Joseph bubbles over with *hineh* after *hineh* in narrating his dream. AV renders: "For beholde, wee were binding sheaves in the field, and loe, my sheafe arose, and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheafe." ("Behold" twice and "lo" once for the same word, *hineh.*) NEB translates: "We were in the field binding sheaves, and my sheaf rose on end and stood upright, and your sheaves gathered round and bowed low before my sheaf." Each of the three times that *hineh* occurs, it is simply ignored. The result is a fine, plain sentence. But though it is true we don't want "behold" or "lo," surely we want *something* to indicate Joseph's excitement? To my ear, *hineh* here means, "Look, it was like this." I would venture to translate the sentence in some such way as: "Look, it was like this: we were binding sheaves in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose on end and stood up and your sheaves actually gathered round. . . ." This means translating *hineh* in three different ways in the course of a single sentence. "Suddenly" and "actually" are not literal translations of *hineh,* nor are they ideal equivalents; but they do perhaps give some idea of the sense of urgency and excitement that in the Hebrew they add to Joseph's telling about his dreams. Similarly, when he can't refrain from telling his second dream, he bursts out: *hineh chalamti chalom od,* which I would almost render: "Hey fellows, I've had *another* dream!" (NEB does attempt the *hineh* here: "Listen: I have had another dream.") It's not his dreaming but his compulsive talking about it that angers his brothers. The Hebrew says, literally: "And they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words." (NEB: "and they hated him still more because of his dreams and what he said.") The meaning is, *"for his dreams and for talking about them."* Anybody can have dreams of glory, but to tell them in public, with an air of innocent delight, to one's older brothers, is to ask for trouble. All this seems to me to be packed into that brief Hebrew phrase, *al-chalomotav ve-al devarav.* The simplicity of the narrative style of the Joseph story is not inconsistent with considerable subtlety of suggestion, and the problem is how to render this in translation. Knox does it in his characteristically discursive way: "So this talk about his dream fed the fires of their envious anger." But surely this is altogether too "literary"?

IT IS NOT for the rendering of the narrative portions of the Bible that many readers will prefer the familiar AV to NEB. Here for the most part we are glad to shed the archaisms and find new renderings established by scholarship (e.g., we know now that *ketonet pasim* is not "a coat of many colors," though it is far from certain whether it means NEB's "long, sleeved robe": the evidence of cuneiform inventories suggests "ornamented tunic"). But in the more poetic parts of the Bible some may feel that the NEB translators have lost the old poetry which has not been compensated for by a new accuracy.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall want nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
and leads me beside the waters of peace;
he renews life within me,
and for his name's sake guides me in the right path.
Even though I walk through a valley dark as death
I fear no evil, for thou art with me,
thy staff and thy crook are my comfort.

Many will prefer the familiar:

The Lord is my shepheard, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie downe in greene pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soule:
He leadeth me in the pathes of righteousness, for his names sake.
Yea though I walke through the valley of the shadowe of death,
I will feare no evill: for thou art with me,
Thy rod and thy staffe, they comfort me.*

To some the "-eth" verb endings provide the proper liturgical effect, and the Psalm *ought* to be

* In quoting from the King James or Authorized Version, I am using the reprint of the 1611 Bible in the Tudor Translations series, London, 1903. This retains the original spelling and punctuation, but arranges the poetry into appropriate line lengths in a way not found in the original.

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in a somewhat archaic English. Again, we come to the question of layers of style. Were not some at least of the Psalms written in an idiom that appeared archaic and highly stylized to those who first collected them?

A translation which seeks wholly and only precise word-for-word literal accuracy is Father Mitchell Dahood's in the Anchor Bible:

Yahweh is my shepherd,
I shall not lack.
In green meadows he will make me lie down;
Near tranquil waters will he guide me,
to refresh my being.
He will lead me into luxuriant pastures,
as befits his name.
Even though I should walk
in the midst of total darkness,
I shall fear no danger
since you are with me.
Your rod and your staff—
behold, they will lead me.

This conveys the prosody of the Hebrew, as well as all that modern scholarship can discover about its meaning.* And it has a quiet dignity of its own NEB does not seem all that much more accurate than AV, but it has lost some of its magic. Why "I shall want nothing" instead of the familiar "I shall not want," which is exactly what the Hebrew says (or "I shall not lack," as Dahood renders it)? Presumably, because it is more idiomatic modern English. Did one of the "literary advisers" suggest this? And what about "through a valley dark as death"? The Hebrew word *tsalmut* (deep darkness, terror) can be vocalized as *tsalmavet* (shadow of death), and this was done by the Masoretes though it is largely rejected by modern scholarship. So if you read *tsalmavet* you get the traditional phrase "the valley of the shadow of death," and if you read *tsalmut* you get something like "the valley of terrible darkness." But to render, as NEB does, "a valley dark as death" seems to be a deliberate falling between two stools, as though the translators were not willing to give up altogther the traditional "valley of the shadow of death" but knew that the Masoretic pointing that gave this reading was highly dubious. However, they may take a little comfort from Dahood's cheerful observation that perhaps the word could after all be read as *tsalmavet*, "with *mavet* [death] serving the function of a superlative." My point is that the NEB translators, in some of the poetic parts of the Old Testament, seem to hesitate among the claims of tradition, of philological accuracy, and of modern idiom. The last is their least flexible criterion, and again—the Bible being what it is—one wonders if this represented the right order of priorities.

* See Milton Himmelfarb's essay, "Translating the Psalms," in COMMENTARY, February 1968 and "The Psalms in Translation," an exchange between Mitchell Dahood and Milton Himmelfarb, September 1968.—Ed.

SOME OF the prophetic books of the Bible are, in parts at least, the most straightforward for the translator concerned with style and tone, for a prophet denouncing or comforting or predicting is clearly not involved with different layers of style: he is speaking as directly as he can to his contemporaries. Isaiah's vision of universal peace comes across equally effectively in AV and NEB. NEB emends a reading and improves the natural history and also makes some philological corrections ("fatling" becomes "shall grow up"; the "asp" becomes a "cobra" and the "cockatrice's den" a "viper's nest"), but cannot really improve on AV. The translator's job is simply to lay it on the line: the style creates itself:

The wolfe also shall dwell with the lambe, and the leopard shall lie downe with the kid: and the calfe and the yong lion, and the fatling together, and a litle child shall lead them. And the cow and the beare shall feed, their yong ones shall lie downe together: and the lion shall eat straw *like the oxe. And the suckling childe shall play* on the hole of the aspe, and the weaned childe shall put his hand on the cockatrice denne. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountaine: for the earth shall bee full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

That is the AV rendering of Isaiah 11:6-9. Here is NEB:

Then the wolf shall live with the sheep,
and the leopard lie down with the kid;
the calf and the young lion shall grow up
together,
and a little child shall lead them;
the cow and the bear shall be friends,
and their young shall lie down together.
The lion shall eat straw like cattle;
the infant shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the young child dance over the viper's nest.
They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy
mountain;
for as the waters fill the sea,
so shall the land be filled with the knowledge
of the Lord.

The picture of the young child dancing over the viper's nest will probably appeal to most modern readers more than that of the weaned child putting his hand on the cockatrice's den, though the latter, with its mixture of natural and heraldic suggestion, has a certain charm. "The cow and the bear shall be friends" has a splendid Winnie-the-Pooh sort of directness, it being possible to read "be friends" instead of "shall feed" because of the identical nature of the Hebrew words for "to like, to associate with," and "feed a flock" (*raa* in each case). But why does NEB change the order in the last sentence, to read "for as the waters fill the sea, so shall the land be filled with the knowledge of the Lord"? The AV order, which is precisely that of the Hebrew, is both more eloquent and more accurate: "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." The reversal of the original

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order in NEB was presumably made by the "literary advisers" on stylistic grounds. I can see no justification for it: it does violence to the movement and rhythms of the original and substitutes for the subtle rhetoric of the Hebrew, where the simile comes after the major affirmation to provide both an emphasis and a dying fall, a coarser rhetorical movement with the obvious climax of "knowledge of the Lord."

Nevertheless, NEB does well with prophetic speech on the whole, effectively rendering its urgency and its desperate reaching to communicate. There are, of course, points where it is more accurate than AV, but it is surprising how little difference to the general effect the points of accuracy make. This is not true of all books of the Bible. In that fascinating and sometimes puzzling book Job, for example, some of the most often quoted passages that have become proverbial in the 1611 version are now known to have been totally misunderstood. Thus, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day, upon the earth" (Job 19:25), becomes, in NEB, "But in my heart I know that my vindicator lives and that he will rise last to speak in court"—this draws attention to the legal terminology in which much of Job's argument with God is couched: Job's main point is that he has been punished for crimes about which he has not been told and about which he knows nothing, and he demands to know what the charge is so that his attorney can make a proper defense—and in his heart he knows that the defending attorney *will* eventually have a chance to speak. New renderings such as this reveal theological and doctrinal implications to no less an extent than the Bible translations of the 16th century revealed new meanings in formerly mistranslated texts on which enormous superstructures of theological inference had been raised. In Jewish as in medieval Christian tradition, and to an even greater extent in the former, inference from the biblical text produced vast bodies of doctrine and of precept, so that any suggestion by modern scholars that the traditional reading of the text is simply wrong has implications far beyond the realm of philology or textual criticism. How far a modern Bible translator should try to build into his translation some sense of what the text has meant to generations of readers as well as giving his conception of its "real" or "original" meaning is a question more easily posed than answered. And even if we say that this should be done, there is the further question as to whether it is feasible. Nevertheless, to make the point once again, the ideal translator should have some understanding of the ambiguity of such terms as "real" or "original" in this context.

THE SOPHISTICATED upper-class melancholy of Ecclesiastes calls for special techniques on the part of the translator. The proverbial element can easily be paraphrased into its everyday "meaning," so that "cast thy bread upon the waters" (which is literally what the Hebrew says) becomes "send your goods overseas" (as Robert Gordis translated it) or, in NEB, "Send your grain across the seas, and in time you will get a return." This is probably what the proverbial expression meant, but surely it is significant that "cast your bread upon the waters" has traditionally been construed as an invitation to charity, while the NEB reads it as an invitation to capitalist investment. There is indeed a lot about property and the life of an affluent society in Ecclesiastes, and the problems of the rich are much in evidence. ("There is a singular evil here under the sun which I have seen: a man hoards wealth to his own hurt, and then that wealth is lost through an unlucky venture, and the owner's son left with nothing." NEB is good in rendering this kind of brisk talk about financial dilemmas.) But Ecclesiastes also contains its own brand of eloquently melancholy poetry where the tone is easier to determine than the precise meaning. The first seven verses of the concluding chapter provide a test case for one kind of Bible translation. AV translates:

> Remember now thy Creatour in the dayes of thy youth, while the evil daies come not, nor the yeeres drawe nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them: While the Sunne, or the light, or the moone, or the starres be not darkened, nor the cloudes returne after the raine: in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bowe themselves, and the grinders cease, because they are fewe, and those that looke out of the windowes be darkened: and the doores shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and the daughters of musicke shall be brought low. Also they shall be afraid of that which is high, and feares shall be in the way, and the Almond tree shall flourish, the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall faile: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners goe about the streets: or ever the silver corde be loosed, or the golden bowle be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountaine, or the wheele broken at the cisterne. Then shall the dust returne to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall returne unto God who gave it.

This is beautiful, and at the same time somewhat mysterious. The keepers of the house and the grinders and the daughters of music have no very clear connotations to most readers. Modern translators sacrifice some of the suggestiveness to greater precision. For Robert Gordis the "grinders" were "the grinding maidens" and the next verse is rendered:

> When the doubled doors on the street are shut,
> And the voice of the mill becomes low.
> One wakes at the sound of a bird,
> And all the daughters of song are laid low.

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When one fears to climb a height,
And terrors lurk in a walk.

We now see that we are dealing with a description of the fears of old age. In the attractively-produced edition of the five *megillot* and Jonah giving both the Hebrew text and the new translation of the Jewish Publication Society of America,* Ecclesiastes 12:3-5 reads:

When the guards of the house become shaky,
And the men of valor are bent,
And the maids that grind, grown few, are idle,
And the ladies that peer through the windows grow dim,
And the doors to the street are shut—
With the noise of the handmill growing fainter,
And the song of the bird growing feebler,
And all the strains of music dying down;
When one is afraid of heights
And there is terror on the road.
For the almond tree may blossom,
The grasshopper be burdened,
And the caper bush may bud again;
But a man sets out for his eternal abode,
With mourners all around in the street.

We are left in no doubt that this is a description of old age, for the footnotes tell us that "the guards of the house" are the arms, the "men of valor" the legs, the "maids that grind" the teeth, "the ladies that peer through the windows" the eyes, and "the doors to the street" the ears. Everything is now clear, except the line "The grasshopper be burdened," and here a footnote tells us that "emendation yields 'The squill (post-biblical Heb. *hasab)* resume its burden,' i.e., its blossom-stalk and its leaves."

The problem here is complex. Modern literary criticism is accustomed to seek ambiguities and suggestions in poetic imagery and to recognize that the rational is, in poetry, in cooperation with the passionate and the emotive. But when you are dealing with a poetry written in an ancient language, which is playing games with proverbs which *may* have been traditional to the original writer, but which may on the other hand have been either variations on traditional proverbs or wholly new insights cast into the form of the traditional proverb, the translator is faced with an impossible dilemma. Of course, if he himself is a gifted poet as well as a profound scholar, he might be able to devise a form of expression which contains the same kind of counterpointing of reverberating suggestiveness and brisk proverbial wisdom; but such a combination of talents is not to be hoped for in Bible translators, however well equipped, and in the end they must resort to a literal rendering accompanied by footnotes or else a rendering which, while as philologically accurate as is possible, is also agreeably phrased and at the same time captures something of the rhythms of the original. I think that the NEB translators have made this their aim, though their procedure of adding to their scholarly rendering the views of non-scholarly "literary experts" (I mean non-scholarly in the original language) means that they have given up the hope of any kind of "unified sensibility" in their version. In the circumstances, NEB does quite well. Here is their rendering of Ecclesiastes 12:1-7:

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the time of trouble comes and the years draw near when you will say, "I see no purpose in them." Remember him before the sun and the light of day give place to darkness, before the moon and the stars grow dim, and the clouds return with the rain—when the guardians of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the women grinding the meal cease work because they are few, and those who look through the windows look no longer, when the street-doors are shut, when the noise of the mill is low, when the chirping of the sparrow grows faint and the song-birds fall silent; when men are afraid of a steep place and the street is full of terrors, when the blossom whitens on the almond-tree and the locust's paunch is swollen and caper-buds have no more zest. For man goes to his everlasting home, and the mourners go about the streets. Remember him before the silver cord is snapped and the golden bowl is broken, before the pitcher is shattered at the spring and the wheel broken at the well, before the dust returns to the earth as it began and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

This passage ends with the repetition of the recurring formula which AV renders in the well-known phrase, "Vanitie of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanitie of vanities, all is vanitie." R. B. Y. Scott, in his extremely interesting Anchor Bible version, renders it: "A vapor of vapors!—says Qoheleth—All is vapor!" The new Jewish Publication Society translation is "Utter futility—said Koheleth—All is futile." NEB translates: "Emptiness, emptiness, says the Speaker, all is empty." The Hebrew *hevel* means "breath, breeze, nothingness, emptiness, transitoriness." Surely the traditional "vanity" makes the point very well: I see no reason for altering it. The philological problem here is quite different from that posed in the phrase "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth," for the Hebrew *borecha* could conceivably be read *bor'cha,* "your grave" (literally, "pit"), which certainly makes sense in the context. Scott so translates it: "In the days of your youth, remember your grave." The new Jewish Publication Society translation, rather more dubiously in my opinion, takes the word to mean "your vigor," from the post-biblical *bori,* meaning "health" (and also "basis, foundation"). But this is a straight problem in philology, and has nothing to do with the tone and quality of translation.

* *The Five Megilloth and Jonah: A New Translation.* Introductions by H. L. Ginsberg, with drawings by Ismar David. Jewish Publication Society of America, 189 pp., $5.00.

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THE FIVE *megillot* (The Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther) are linked in Jewish tradition both because of their relative shortness and because they are read at specific festivals or fasts (the Sabbath of Passover, Shavuot, the Ninth of Ab, the Sabbath of Succot, and Purim, respectively) but the problems they pose for the translator are very various. Ginsberg's edition adds Jonah, which is read on Yom Kippur. The lush erotic imagery of The Song of Songs (which is a dialogue of love between a man and a woman, with an occasional chorus of onlookers—NEB indicates the speaker in each case) is something unique in the Bible, and every time I read it I am struck anew with wonder that it was accepted into the biblical canon by both Jews and Christians. Jews allegorized it as a dialogue between God and His people, and Christians as a dialogue between Christ and His Church, which is pretty far-fetched in either case, but we must be glad that the Rabbis and the Church Fathers had this idea, for it has preserved a remarkable dramatic poem which might otherwise have been lost. In terms of style and tone there is little problem: a literal translation prescribes its own style and it comes over very well. But it is a difficult work philologically, and there is considerable scope for difference of opinion in interpreting individual words and phrases. Do we prefer NEB's rendering of 2:3?

> Like an apricot-tree among the trees of the wood,
> so is my beloved among boys.
> To sit in its shadow was my delight,
> and its fruit was sweet to my taste.

Or AV?

> As the apple trees among the trees of the wood,
> So is my beloved among the sonnes.
> I sate down under his shadow with great delight,
> And his fruit was sweete to my taste.*

I suppose the NEB translators had some good reason for rendering *tapuach* (which so far as I know has always meant "apple" or "apple-tree") as "apricot-tree." (The talmudic word for apricot is *afarsek,* which also means "peach," and there is the later Hebrew *mishmesh.*) The new Jewish Publication Society rendering is:

> Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest,
> So is my beloved among the youths.
> I delight to sit in his shade,
> And his fruit is sweet to my mouth.

The really interesting difference here concerns the shade and the fruit. The Hebrew *betsilo* could mean either "his shade" or "its shade," and similarly *piryo* could mean "his fruit" or "its fruit." NEB refers both the shade and the fruit to the tree. This is purely a matter of tact, but it does seem to me needlessly puritanical to concentrate on the tree rather than on the young man: I feel sure myself that the fruit that was sweet to the girl's taste was the young man's kisses.

The Book of Ruth, a beautiful simple story, presents no great problems to the translator and reads as well in NEB as in Ginsberg's edition. Some of the simplest Hebrew formulas can, however, present problems. What do we do with the traditional "once upon a time" formula of *vayehi*? AV renders the opening of Ruth as: "And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged." The new Jewish Publication Society's translation omits the word: "In the days when the chieftains ruled." NEB renders: "Long ago, in the time of the judges," and I suppose that "long ago" is as good a way as any of translating *vayehi.* I am surprised that nobody has ventured on "once upon a time," for the word is a pure opening formula for a story.

The most extraordinary rendering of the Book of Ruth in modern times is that of Monsignor Knox, who moves the story on in a dreamlike languid manner that has a charm of its own though it is quite unlike the briskness of the Hebrew:

> Here is thy sister-in-law gone back, Noemi† said, back to her people and the gods they worship; do thou, too, go with her. Nay, said Ruth, do not press me to go back and leave thee. I mean to go where thou goest, and dwell where thou dwellest; thy people shall be my people, thy God my God; whatever earth closes over thee when thou diest shall be my land, and my own burial-place. Due meed of punishment the Lord give me, and more than due, if aught but death part thee and me.

Compare NEB:

> "You see," said Naomi, "Your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; go back with her." "Do not urge me to go back and desert you," Ruth answered. "Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. I swear a solemn oath before the Lord your God: nothing but death shall divide us."

Here is the new Jewish Publication Society's version:

> So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and her gods. Go follow your sister-in-law. But Ruth replied, "Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus and more may the Lord do to me if anything but death parts me from you."

NEB paraphrases the Hebrew formula of imprecation "thus and more may the Lord do to me" as "I swear a solemn oath before the Lord

* Of course the possessive "its" was unknown to the AV translators, so "his" might refer either to the tree or the man. The ambiguity is precisely the same in Hebrew.

† Noemi is the Vulgate form of the name.

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your God," which raises the whole question of whether and where in Bible translation paraphrase should replace translation. All in all, it is hard to improve on AV:

> And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone backe unto her people, and unto her gods: returne thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, Intreate me not to leave thee, or to returne from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will goe; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I bee buried: the Lord doe so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

The use of "thee" and "thou," the word "intreate," the old-fashioned "whither," do not, I think, in any way offend the modern ear in this context. They add to the primitive simplicity of the story. But of course a translator must be consistent once he has decided to eliminate these archaisms. Or must he? The Book of Ruth can stand as an antique story, commenting as it were on the Book of Judges which could be rendered in a more direct modern historical style. Once again we come to the question of biblical strata.

The Bible is a whole library, and in a single article one cannot pursue the question of translation book by book. But a word of praise is due to the new Jewish Publication Society's lively and pleasing—even racy—translation of the Book of Esther. One has only to put its rendering of the opening phrase *vayehi bimei Achashverosh,* "It happened in the days of Ahasuerus," beside the more long-winded NEB version, "the events here related happened in the days of Ahasuerus" (a *megillah* indeed!), to see how it skips along. Then there is the moving Lamentations, the splendid little book of Jonah—and, with regard to the New Testament, I was going to talk also about the problems posed by the opening verses of the Gospel of St. John. But "of making many bookes there is no end" (AV), or "the use of books is endless" (NEB), or "the making of many books is without limit" (JPS), or "book learning is an endless occupation" (Scott). The same goes for articles on the Book of Books.

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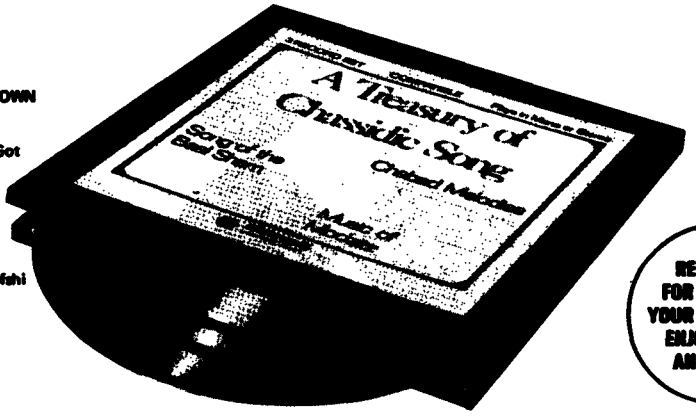

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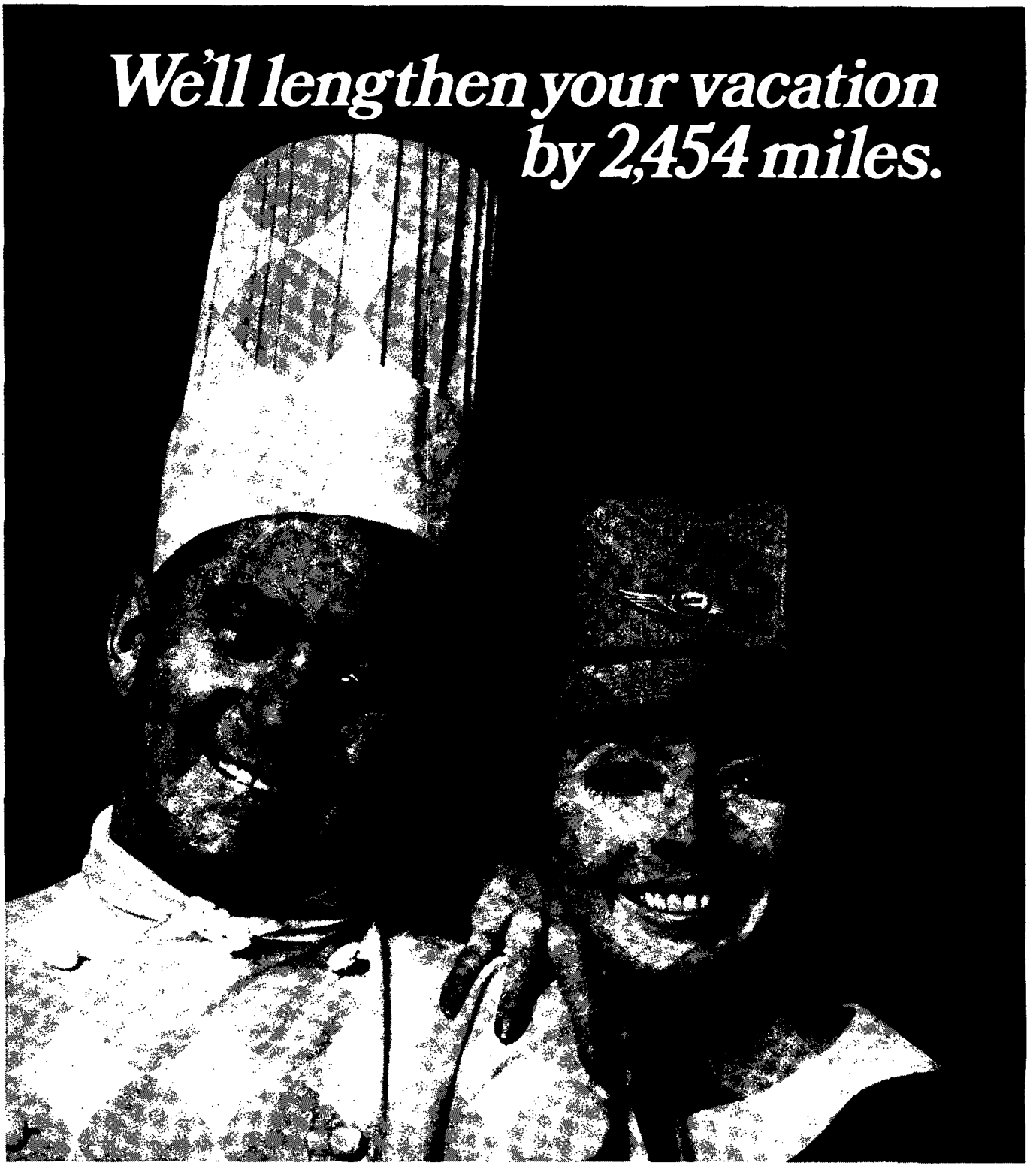

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The Obligations of Oppressed Minorities

Michael Walzer

I had reduced everything to the simple theory that the oppressed are always right and the oppressors are always wrong: a mistaken theory, but the natural result of being one of the oppressors yourself.

—George Orwell

MAJORITY RULE is the hardest question in democratic theory. There are certainly good arguments to be made for allowing the people to rule—if only the people had some collective identity or general will and did not always demand to be counted! What can possibly be said for allowing 51 per cent of the people to rule? Mostly we fall back on a practical argument, morally rooted in the idea of a political community, a single unified order which is temporarily represented or activated, in lieu of anything better, by a majority of its members. Thus John Locke: civil society is *one body*; one body can only move in one direction; so it must move "whither the greater force carries it." The greater force is, however, not always the force of numbers. Political bodies can be moved, and generally are, by relatively small numbers of men who possess wealth, offices, inherited status, or a monopoly on the means of violence. The defense of majority rule requires something more: a theory of equality stipulating that every man ought to have and must be provided with the same political force as every other man. Then the "greater force" can only be discovered by counting heads.

There are, then, two moral reasons for a minority to yield to majority rule. First, because it too is a part of the community and acknowledges the unity of the state; second, because it too has been counted. And, there is an overriding practical reason: there must be some decision; the state must act; there is no option; and how else but by "greater force"? If we assume further that the adding up of individual wills takes place at the end of a political process during which all citizens are equally free to make arguments, we can add another moral and another practical reason for minority obedience. By participating in the process, knowing in advance its regular course and the possibility of an adverse outcome, individuals agree to the legitimacy (though not to the rightness) of the eventual decision. If they lose out, they defer to the majority, hoping that one day they will not lose out and will be deferred to in turn. The only alternative is war, but by joining the argument they have committed themselves to politics, and politics, given their minority position, remains their safest choice. Hence, even if they are outraged by the majority decision and feel morally bound to disobey, they will choose, if they are wise, to disobey in political ways, which do not call into question the survival of the democratic system.

This describes an ideal case, however, and its three crucial assumptions are rarely realized in practice. So we must ask, what is the status of majority rule if 1) the unity of the state is not universally acknowledged; 2) all citizens are not, in fact, politically equal; and 3) the political process is not absolutely open and free? The question can be put more directly: what if there exists a minority group which either is or regards itself as separate from the political community and whose members are or feel themselves to be oppressed? Obviously there are such groups in more than one modern democratic state. Sometimes their members occupy a single piece of territory within the larger community, and then their politics is likely to take separatist or secessionist forms. They will not challenge majority rule so much as the political integrity of the state within which a particular majority rules. They claim the right to be a majority in their own state. I am inclined to concede this right, though somtimes there are other claims to be considered. It is not difficult to imagine a situation in which a right (of the minority) to secede or attempt secession coexists with an obligation (of the majority) to defend the original union. In many cases, however, and these are the ones I want to discuss, the minority is geographically dispersed. Then the issue is not the integrity of the union, but the legitimacy of majority rule. What are the obligations of an oppressed minority in a state where only the members of the majority are entirely free and equal? That is not a question that can be answered until something more is said about the nature of the oppression, but for the moment let it stand as this: members of the minority, for whatever reason, do not "count" in the same way as everyone else.

The case is not difficult where they do not count at all. Then the oppressed persons simply have no political obligations, or, rather, no obligations to the state. Slaves owe nothing to their

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masters and nothing again to the ruling committee of their masters. Nor do the relative numbers of slaves and masters make any difference, except in the strategic considerations of the two groups. Cases where the oppressed are recognized as citizens are much harder. Their votes are honestly counted, let us assume, but as it turns out they never win. They are free to organize, but they face a thousand petty difficulties and their attempts to sustain large-scale organizations regularly fail. Patterns of social and economic discrimination reinforce their minority political status (and their political weakness reinforces the social and economic patterns—it hardly matters which way the causal connections are worked). The pressure they can bring to bear within the political system is limited. Their day-to-day lives offer them little hope. They are trapped in a moral and political ghetto—in a country that is still in some serious sense open and democratic. Obviously the situation I am sketching is something like that of American black people, though the sketch is formal in character and hardly suggests their long years of humiliation and outrage. It also ignores the problems of elite domination in the modern state. I am simply assuming what many blacks believe, and what seems plausible: that they confront a unified, though not a monolithic, white majority, that they are the victims of *popular* oppression. What obligations can they possibly be said to owe to the (more or less) democratic state?

On this issue, liberal and democratic theorists have had very little to say, but what they have said is clear enough and, it must be admitted, very radical. They have argued, in effect, that oppressed minorities have no obligations at all within the political system. "And where the body of the people, or any single man," writes Locke, "is deprived of their right . . . there they have liberty to appeal to heaven [that is, to rebel, to make war against the government], whenever they judge the cause of sufficient moment."* Of course, Locke's conception of "right" did not explicitly include a right of political participation. That is a later extension, but it is one that would today be difficult to deny. For oppression can never be limited to the political sphere: it endangers a man's "life, liberty, and property" as soon as it diminishes his political force, and so it cuts away his (Lockeian) reasons for consenting to government and obeying the law. The seriousness of Locke's commitment to consent theory is best revealed by the last phrase in the passage I have quoted: the crucial judgment about oppression must be made by the "oppressed" themselves. Feeling oppressed, then, yields the same "liberty to appeal to heaven" as being oppressed. Rousseau, in *A Discourse on Political Economy*, characteristically suggests a more objective judgment, but the essential point is the same. The social contract "would in point of right be dissolved" if a single citizen were treated wrongly. The victims of injustice are released from every social bond; they are free in society, or they are free out of it, for they can never rightly be oppressed.

It might be argued that Rousseau did not really believe this, since he defends the legitimacy of states, like that of ancient Rome, where more than one citizen, indeed, many more than one, were treated wrongly. I am going to do the same thing, though with less resolution, since it is difficult to regard the United States today with anything like the admiration Rousseau felt for the Roman Republic. But I want first to grant the moral force of the argument: where justice is not done, there is no legitimate state and no obligation to obey. I also want to deny the force of the easiest response: that all human creations, and states especially, are imperfect, hence to be endured as long as possible. This is no response at all, for, if it condones anything, it condones equally the imperfect justice of the government and the imperfect obedience of its subjects. If oppression is to be accepted as an inevitable feature of the political condition, then why not violent rebellion? Isn't the arrogance of the oppressor a far greater human imperfection—to say the least—than the rage of the oppressed?

WHEN OPPRESSED men exercise their "liberty" and act out their rage, they do so in relation to two social groups, and therefore the extent and limits of that liberty must be twice specified, each time in a different way. They act first with or on behalf of the group that they themselves constitute and (sometimes) bring to self-consciousness by their action. Not their rights as individuals but their connection to the mass of the oppressed is their reference point in explaining to themselves and to each other what they can and cannot do. They act secondly within the larger community and against their oppressors. Here the democratic state and their own ambiguous citizenship is the reference point of their arguments and justifications. Both these references can best be explicated, I think, by looking closely at all that is implied by words like "on behalf of" and "within," and this is what I shall try to do in the rest of the essay. My discussion will necessarily ignore much else that ought to be taken into account; I shall have to justify its emphases as I go along. There are few guidelines, for political philosophers have not dwelt upon the moral life of the oppressed.

I have already suggested that oppressed individuals rarely experience their oppression as individuals. Their suffering is shared, and they come to know one another in a special way. They

* *Second Treatise*, paragraph 168. Locke specifies that this liberty only exists when the oppressed "have no judge on earth," but he seems to believe that they have "no judge" and so no appeal short of heaven (that is, war) whenever the government designs or participates in their oppression.

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have an understanding among themselves—by no means founded on mutual admiration—which no one outside the circle of oppression can readily share and which no one inside the circle can easily escape. From this understanding obligations follow, their content determined by the specific interactions of the oppressed, their force determined by the intensity of those interactions and their almost suffocating closeness. It is the fate of the oppressed that the whole of their moral lives be mediated by their common situation.* For this reason, something must be said about the obligations they owe to one another before anything can usefully be said of their "liberty" within the state.

I cannot specify the procedures through which patterns of recognition and solidarity or definitions of loyalty and betrayal are worked out. The procedures are informal; it is not the case that they are constituted by a succession of voluntary acts, any more than the group of the oppressed is constituted by a series of individual contracts. Members of the group do form voluntary associations, at least partly to make the patterns and definitions as precise as possible and to enforce them. And they form different associations because they disagree as soon as they try to be precise. Yet there is a sense in which the possibility of acting faithfully and the possibility of breaking trust pre-exist all voluntary acts. This is part of what it means to be oppressed, and it suggests the two ways in which oppression marks the limit of the consensual universe. "It is the anti-Semite who makes the Jew," writes Sartre, and that means, first, that the Jew does not make himself and, second, that he must make himself an (authentic) Jew. The same thing is true of the black man: he did not choose blackness; now he must choose blackness.

These are not conventional or easy moral assertions, perhaps they are not moral assertions at all, though Sartre's insistence that inauthenticity is never "morally blameworthy" is belied by the tone in which he writes about it. One ought never agree too quickly to match the coercion of the oppressor (all black men must defer) with the coercion of the oppressed (all black men must resist). Individuals do escape, or at least they seem (sometimes to themselves, sometimes only to the others) to escape. They pass or assimilate, or they hide. They choose to be inauthentic Jews or blacks. Such men are surely not traitors, not in any literal sense of that word. But they are not quite faithful either. They have moved into a world of deceit and self-deceit, where trust and mutuality are lost ideals.

Obligations in the strict sense are established when the more active members of oppressed groups form organizations for mutual defense or political struggle. The precise content of these obligations, the political or social creed to which the activists commit themselves, the relative intensity of the commitment—all this has to be negotiated and is negotiated with very different results in different organizations. There is no single correct result that I or anyone else can stipulate. Nevertheless, I do think that certain general things can be said about the obligations of activists, given the claim they commonly make: to speak or act on behalf of oppressed men and women.† It is important to try to do this, since the activists are rarely authorized to speak or act on behalf of anyone (I do not mean that they have no right to do so) nor is it easy for the mass of the oppressed to repudiate them because of what they say or do. A certain responsibility to the mass is sometimes enforced within particular organizations of activists or, more often, through competition among different organizations. Whenever this enforcement is attempted, arguments are made about political obligation, arguments that focus, consciously or not, on the problem of the unauthorized agent. It is easy to be outraged at the plight of others, especially easy, perhaps, for a man who shares or has shared that plight, but it is not easy to act for them when they are unable to act for themselves. Many men claim to do so; other men question their good faith. Despite endless variations in theory and rhetoric, these arguments have a recurrent form. We encounter them often in the history of the Left: action on behalf of others is the Left's version of virtual representation and shares the same difficulties and dangers. I want to examine these, first with occasional reference to their classic exposition in the work of Marx and Trotsky, then with specific reference to an example drawn from the recent history of black militancy.

THE BASIC principle of arguments about responsibility is simply that the activists, when they commit themselves to work on behalf of the oppressed, also commit themselves to work as effectively as they can and actually to help the oppressed whenever they can. But what does it mean to work "effectively" or "actually to help" the oppressed? Who shall judge the effects or the helpfulness? I should think that the immediate goals of the activists must be set by the general consciousness of the oppressed group rather than by their own ideology. The ef-

* This argument does not relate only to politics, but also to art and culture: see Irving Howe, "Black Boys and Native Sons," *Dissent*, Autumn 1963.

† In the paragraphs that follow, I have been helped a great deal by Hannah Pitkin's discussion of what it means to "act for" someone else, in *The Concept of Representation*, Chapter 6. I should note as she does (p. 127) that the Oxford English Dictionary distinguishes the phrases "on behalf of" and "in behalf of." The first indicates a representative function (acting in someone else's name, with his authorization); the second has the sense which I have singled out: "in the interest of, as friend or defender of, for the benefit of," but the phrase is no longer in common use. "On behalf of" is now used in both senses.

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fects can only be judged by those who will feel them. "Helping" someone usually means doing something for him that he regards or seems likely to regard (given his present state of mind) as helpful. There are exceptions to this rule, but each exception requires justification; it usually requires some plausible claim to special knowledge on the part of the active persons—such as a doctor or a lawyer might make. But this is an especially implausible claim for political activists to make, so long as they wish to maintain that they are struggling for equality. Not that they must acquiesce in the established forms of deference and passivity; then they would not be activists at all. They may and they often should seek "to raise the level of consciousness" among the oppressed through various sorts of educational and political work, even, sometimes, by setting an example of boldness and militancy. But they win the "liberty" that oppression confers only if they respond to the felt needs of their putative constituents and represent these to the larger community. Otherwise they are not acting for the oppressed at all, but for themselves (not necessarily in their own interests, perhaps for the sake of their own ideals). Then the moral rules relevant to their activity are not those we derive from the situation of oppressed minorities, but rather those we derive from the experience of sect life in a democratic society. Sectarian activists, in contrast to the oppressed groups from which they sometimes come, are likely to be both free and equal, even to be counted in ways that exaggerate their numbers.

ONE MIGHT even suggest that sectarian activists often stand to the oppressed group in rather the same relation as does the oppressor government, even though they are without the same power. They are a competing elite; they make similar claims to esoteric knowledge; they replace the general struggle for freedom and equality with their own struggle for recognition and power. This replacement can take different forms depending on the ideology that rationalizes it, and though it is often self-serving, I do not want to sugggest that it is always that or merely that. Nor is the pride a man may take in having worked his way through to a coherent ideological position necessarily a false pride. But there is a great difference in the moral position of a would-be leader who finds his warrant for action in his ideology alone and one who finds his warrant in the fact that he can give his ideology currency among the oppressed themselves. Only the second is a leader *of* the oppressed, defining their interests in terms they, or many of them, can and do accept. But it might be argued that the first man, given his ideology and assuming his good faith, is nevertheless bound to act as he does, for how else can he honestly help the oppressed? Perhaps this is so, but to whom is he bound? Not to the oppressed men and women whose consciousness he rejects: surely he takes their name in vain. Then he is bound only to himself, if that is possible, and to the small band of militants who share his commitments. And the militancy of such a group, whose members necessarily act on their own behalf whatever else they do or think they are doing, easily degenerates into one or another kind of elitist conspiracy. Marx's description of the relation of Blanquist sectarians to the working class points to just such a degeneration:

> These *conspirateurs* do not limit themselves to the mere task of organizing the proletariat; not at all. Their business lies precisely in trying to pre-empt the developing revolutionary process, drive it artificially to crisis. . . . For them, the only necessary condition for a revolution is an adequate organization of their conspiracy. . . . Hence their deepest disdain for the more theoretical enlightenment of the workers about their class interests.*

Marx is not making a moral but rather a tactical argument here—or so he would say—and his hatred for the *conspirateurs* hangs on his conviction that there is a revolutionary process. If such a process cannot be, or if it is not discerned, or if it proceeds or seems to proceed at too slow a pace to offer any hope for those who are oppressed *now*, then there may well be arguments for creating a crisis artificially or hastening a crisis that seems likely to come only in the distant future. What this means is that the activists put themselves into some radically exposed position (they seize a building, begin an armed struggle, and so on), expecting a repressive response from the state, and calling on the mass of the oppressed to come to their rescue. Indeed, they may try to force people to come to their rescue by choosing a course of action that endangers not only themselves but everyone else on whose behalf they claim to be acting. If this strategy works, if support is forthcoming, and if major concessions are won, the activists will be called heroes. Yet there is a kind of self-sufficiency, an ability to take risks for oneself alone, implied by the classic idea of the hero, that they seem to lack. Perhaps the real heroes are the men who come to their rescue. In any case, the action can be successful only if they do come, and that means it should be undertaken only if they can be expected to come. Hence "the mere task of organizing" the oppressed must precede the adventures of the activists. And that task, if it is carried forward with energy and seriousness, is very likely to begin a political process, a long revolution, to which contrived crises are superfluous. There will be crises enough in the normal course of things. The whole of the long revolution is a collective adventure, which will have its resonances in the lives of many men and

* Quoted in Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, p. 201.

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women, but which no small group can rightly claim for itself. Thus Trotsky's argument against terrorism, a personal adventure generally undertaken, or so it is said, on behalf of others: "To the terrorist we say . . . only in the mass movement can you find expedient expression for your heroism."

IT IS NEVER possible to know in advance the course of the mass movement or the historic shape of the long revolution. The easiest visual image is one of gradual linear advance, but that image is often deceptive or deceitfully employed. I do not mean to commit the activists to an incremental politics. If they are "actually to help the oppressed whenever they can," however, they have no right to reject any possible improvements in their condition. The argument is sometimes made that all such improvements, short of full liberation, reduce the incentives for further struggle. Men can be partially satisfied, it is said, often at no significant sacrifice by the ruling majority or the established elite, and then the oppression is stabilized, at least for a time, and the activists effectively isolated from their base. Whatever its historical plausibility—the evidence is not easy to assemble or weigh—this argument suggests what seem to me morally impermissible risks. It suggests that the activists give up present and certain gains for the oppressed in the name of a future and impalpable triumph—and a triumph, most likely, in which only they entirely believe. It amounts to saying what has in fact been said more than once in the recent past: the worse, the better. These words probably have to be read: the worse for the mass of the oppressed, the better for the activists. I should add, the better for the *activity* of the activists, for the risks they themselves run may also be heightened. (Once again, I am not suggesting that their politics is necessarily self-serving.) Even put that way, the maxim may well be false. Its possible falseness is less important, however, than the fact that the choice it implies will never be made by the men certain to be most affected by it. So it can never rightly be made in their name.

Actual improvement in the condition of the oppressed is most likely in the special circumstances I am considering, that is, when the larger community is at least formally democratic and when real possibilities exist for open organizational and agitational activity. This is a proposition often disputed, especially in periods of political failure and frustration, but I do not think there are many, even among the activists, who would choose to work underground and live in hiding if they had alternatives. It is important, of course, not to exaggerate the value of democratic rules (as distinct from democratic practice): the mere existence of an *oppressed* minority suggests forcefully that the rules are being worked, twisted, and manipulated, often brutally so, in the interests of the majority or of its leaders. But that only means, I think, that men acting in the name of the minority ought to insist upon the real meaning of the rules and upon the practices that follow from them.

Given the formalities of citizenship and suffrage, oppression is enforced in large part by the incapacities of the oppressed themselves—their economic helplessness, lack of education, inarticulateness, self-hate, and, above all, their political dispersion, disunity, incompetence, and isolation—incapacities at which the whole society more or less openly conspires and which can only be overcome through equally open political struggle. If this struggle is actually being fought on behalf of the oppressed, it must eventually broaden to include them. This is one of the oldest maxims of the Left: "the liberation of the workers can come only through the workers themselves." The same thing can be said about minority groups, though the word "only" is more ambiguous in their case. Thus, it remains a crucial test of all those who claim to work for the oppressed that the action they choose activates as well as benefits other men and women and that it does nothing to lower their faith (low enough already) in the possibility of their own democratic participation. Conspiracy and terrorism never, I think, meet this test; they are the politics, as esoteric ideology is the consciousness, of a competing elite. "Bureaucratism has no confidence in the masses and endeavors to substitute itself for the masses," wrote Trotsky. "Terrorism [functions] in the same manner; it wants to make the masses happy without asking their participation." Oppressed minorities do not find participation easy; that is why the activists must act on their behalf; but in more or less democratic conditions it is a great deal easier to "ask" their participation, to seek it, to work for it. And that means (though Trotsky at this point might not agree) that anyone who really hopes to initiate a liberating politics must exploit the democratic hypocrisy of the majority, conniving at every chance the laws allow for public agitation and large-scale action and breaking the law, whenever necessary, only to increase the chances.

I have used the words "ought" and "should" in the preceding paragraphs because I believe I have been elucidating the moral commitment implied by the phrase "acting on behalf of the oppressed." I have not been exploring questions of tactics, or not these alone. The principles I have put forward are not, nor are they intended to be, tactically specific. That activists must pay attention to and be guided by the consciousness of the oppressed, even if they hope to change that consciousness; that they must not despise concrete improvements in the condition of the oppressed, even if such improvements make their own work harder; that they must act so as to open up, or to keep open, the possibilities of democratic action:

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these seem to me moral injunctions. They follow from commitments that political activists make and reiterate in the course of their struggles. Perhaps I should say that they generally make, for it is at least possible to imagine a vanguard of militants that acted explicitly on its own behalf and whose members were entirely honest about their hope to exploit the misery of the oppressed. The "liberty" of such men is not at issue; they have none at all, despite their ideology, beyond the common liberty of every other citizen. Activists on behalf of the oppressed do have further rights, but their exercise of these rights is or ought to be restrained by the moral responsibility they have accepted.

To complete my description of that responsibility let me cite a recent case in which one black activist called another to account. The exchange is not of great historical significance, but it is worth examining because it is typical in its content and classical in its form. In 1964 Robert Williams, then living in exile in Cuba, issued a call (echoed many times since) for urban guerrilla warfare by Negro Americans:

> The new concept of revolution defies military science and tactics. The new concept is lightning campaigns conducted in highly sensitive urban communities with the paralysis reaching the small communities and spreading to the farm areas. The old method of guerrilla warfare . . . from the hills and countryside, would be ineffective in a powerful country like the USA. Any such force would be wiped out in an hour.*

Thus Williams makes a tactical argument which suggests some sense of moral responsibility to the black community: fewer of its members would die if they fought in this new way. But that is not his primary consideration:

> Of course, there would be great losses on the part of our people. How can we expect liberation without losses? Our people are already being admonished by the nonviolent forces to die for Freedom. . . . If we must die, let us die in the only way that the oppressor will feel the weight of our death. Let us die in the tried and proven way of liberation. If we are going to talk about revolution, let us know what revolution means.

Behind these words lies a vision of revolution as a grand moment of retribution, when the last shall suddenly and violently be first. I would be surprised if that were not a fantasy savored by many American blacks. But Williams offers it as a political program, and as a program it has been sharply criticized by Harold Cruse in his book *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual.* I will summarize Cruse's criticisms in terms of my own three principles, but in doing so I do not mean to suggest that he would endorse the principles as they stand. His own argument is in the service of a particular politics and not of a moral theory.

Cruse begins by insisting that "the masses of our people have not yet said they want a revolution. They want equal rights."† This is a goal to which Williams was (in 1964, at least) publicly committed. But equal rights cannot be won by a revolutionary attack upon the social and political structures within which equality is being sought. Perhaps new structures are necessary—Cruse apparently believes this to be the case—but then Williams must say so and try to convince the men he is inviting to die that their death would have some meaning. As it is, the violent methods he advocates bear no relation to the ends he says he shares with other American blacks. They amount to little more than "a grand act of . . . directionless defiance of the power structure." Moreover, this is a defiance that can only be acted out by a conspiracy of "young warriors." It hardly requires, nor can it evoke, a mass movement. Williams is the advocate, Cruse suggests, of a "one-sided activism" that not only denies the value, but actually blocks and frustrates, political, economic, and cultural work within the larger black community. Then, too, guerrilla warfare, if it ever began, would not make things any better for the men and women on whose behalf it presumably was being fought. Cruse argues that "it is not enough to say . . . 'How can we expect liberation without losses?' It must be added that life is not so cheap that great losses should be bought and paid for by . . . illusory objectives." Or worse: that the losses should be paid for by still greater losses —not only the immediate "death, waste, and destruction," but also the more general effects of an exclusive commitment to insurrectionary politics: the anti-intellectualism, the strain toward nihilism, the failure to explore alternative strategies, the *a priori* rejection of peaceful advance. Cruse's critique of "young warrior adventurism" strikes precisely at its most vulnerable point: that its votaries are often as contemptuous of the immediate needs of the oppressed as they are, with far greater reason, of the "rights" of the oppressors. Finally, Cruse points to the long-term effect of guerrilla warfare on Negro life in America. Given an urban insurrection or a series of insurrections, and given the sort of response from the white community and from the state that Williams himself anticipates, the result can only be a repression so severe that it would blight all hopes for a genuinely democratic politics. "Race war in the United States would probably mean the end of any hope for the Negroes' democratic inclusion in the American scheme of things." Nor is Cruse thinking here only of integration: he means something else, or at least he thinks that something

* Robert Williams in *The Crusader* (monthly newsletter published by Williams while in Cuba), February 1964, quoted in Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, pp. 386-387.

† Cruse's argument is presented on pp. 347-401 of *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual.*

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else might be meant. Whatever is meant, however, "democratic inclusion" requires a politics committed to democracy.

Now Williams, or some other supporter of an insurrectionary politics, might reply to this argument in a variety of ways and with more or less force. I am less concerned to insist that Cruse has made his case than that there is a case to be made. This is the form that arguments about responsibility take and should properly take. But I must stress that these arguments reveal to us only the structure or possible structure of obligations among the oppressed. They tell us nothing direcly about obligations to the state or, generally, to its citizens.

THERE IS A sense in which oppression makes men free, and the more radical the oppression the more radical the freedom. Thus slaves have a right to kill their masters, subject peoples their tyrants. They are set loose from the normal restraints of social life because any violence they commit against masters and tyrants can plausibly be called defensive. "Democratic" oppression is more subtle and confusing, in large part because of the way in which the oppressed people are within the democratic system, enjoying the formal and some of the real benefits of membership. They cannot be reduced to mere objects, and though they are still attacked and injured in a multitude of particular ways by particular other people, their greatest injury derives from the fact that they are inferior (less powerful) subjects within the system. Hence it is especially difficult to identify in any plausible way the agents of their oppression. It seems that everyone is guilty, or everyone but a handful of righteous men, and then the appeal of the oppressed to heaven might well be answered with a second Flood. Since the oppressed must pursue their appeal in this world, whom should they attack? Cruse poses this question clearly: "If Negroes are to 'die in the tried and proven way of liberation,' precisely whom must we take along with us to oblivion? Is it white people—without distinction? Or is it a certain class of white people located in the power structure? Would it be the army or the National Guard or the police? Or . . . the organized aggression of the radical right wing? Perhaps it would be the federal or state power?" For reasons I will discusss later, the answer is likely to be the first. The war of an oppressed minority, if it comes to that, will almost certainly be terrorist in character.

But a kind of intermittent defensive violence is also likely, directed against particular members of the oppressive majority—marauders, vigilantes, sadistic policemen, and so on. This has little to do with war, or revolution, however it is described, and it requires no general view of oppression to justify it. The state exists to protect its members, the democratic state to protect *all* its members, and whenever people are not protected, for whatever reasons, they have every right to protect themselves. In the case of an oppressed minority, this principle may well justify a large number of defensive acts and a considerable range of preparations for defense. It can also be expected that one or another of the bands of activists will construe it as an obligation that they join in the preparations or recommend or initiate them.* So long as they are welcomed by the people they profess to be joining, or helping, that too seems justified. But self-defense and mutual defense are also limiting principles. They apply within the immediate context of violence and not more generally. They do not set people free to engage in preventive or pre-emptive violence. Nor do they set people free to become marauders or vigilantes on their own account. The question is, does oppression itself generate this kind of freedom? Are oppressed men free to become terrorists?

Terrorism has often been called the weapon of the weak, and for a very good reason that needs to be stated clearly: terrorism is also a weapon against the weak, that is, against members of the majority as individual, isolated, helpless *men*. The terrorist does not risk a head-on battle with the police or the army. He does not challenge the state directly, but only through the commitment of the state to defend the everyday security of its citizens. This is extraordinarily difficult to do when even a small group of terrorists sets out to make it so. The state is vulnerable at this point, if at no other: majorities are made of men, and men are easy to kill. It has to be added that the terrorists do not always mean to coerce only the majority. Terrorism invites violent repression, and this necessarily reaches far beyond the (unknown) murderers and arsonists who are its first targets. So it tends and is often intended to provoke a general crisis in the relation of the oppressed minority and the democratic state, forcing the oppressed into a revolutionary posture. Since the effects of this crisis are often disastrous for the oppressed themselves, as well as for the larger community, its protagonists must be judged in terms of the principles I have already outlined. But I want now to consider terrorism from the standpoint of that larger community, and from the standpoint of the state, and to ask whether the "liberty to appeal to heaven," given the form it is likely to take, actually exists.

It has to be said first that this appeal is not always intentionally political and not always the work of men who claim to be acting on behalf of others. There is a kind of spontaneous terror, generally concealed in the crime statistics, occasionally exploding in riot and *jacquerie*, which expresses only the inchoate rage of oppressed

* Thus A. Philip Randolph, writing in the socialist monthly *The Messenger* (1919) on "How to Stop Lynching," urged physical resistance to white mobs in accordance with "the law of self-defense."

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men.* About this, there is painfully little that a moral theorist can say, and much that has been said suggests only that silence is sometimes the most appropriate form of moral discourse. I think it is wrong to attach any honor to such violence or to attempt to justify it (it is not wrong, obviously, to try to understand it). Apolitical murderers and arsonists do not, after all, ask to be justified. They are not claiming a "liberty" and it would be sheer masochism for any of us—their possible victims—to make the claim on their behalf. Nevertheless, the claim has been made. Thus John Thompson in a review in these pages of William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner:*

> We made a community here, agreeing to practice violence only minimally against one another, while reserving the right to practice it totally against others. Negroes . . . were not members of the community. Their nonviolence was imposed, not agreed upon. Now, uninstructed in the unconscious taboos that guard the rest of us from one another, they are free to commit random acts of aggression, pure aggression quite without other aim.†

Styron has brilliantly evoked the meaning of black slavery as a historically specific oppressive system. The reviewer's "now" is his own, and I am not sure it points to anything more specific than the general guiltiness we all feel. But we must try to say more clearly what we feel guilty about. Black Americans do not experience "total" violence today, for reasons I hope I have already suggested, nor does anyone today reserve the right to practice such violence against them. Nor again can it be said that they are incapable of consenting to (else they would be incapable of participating in) the everyday peacefulness of the political community and of the social life it organizes. If their occasional violence, like that of other oppressed groups, is not unexpected, it remains true that large numbers of specific men and women have entirely legitimate expectation as to their ordinary nonviolence. Nor, finally, are black people "uninstructed in the unconscious taboos" of social life. Many among their militants would say they are "instructed" all too well. They are inhibited even in their self-defense; their random aggression is directed most often against other black people. There is a kind of moral hysteria in the suggestion that such violence is "free." Indeed, it is utterly wrong to say that anyone's random aggression is "free." The victims of "total" violence cannot by definition be aggressive: wherever they strike, they strike someone who has struck them first. And the men who endure more subtle sorts of oppression must look to their "aim." If in their rage they are incapable of doing that, it is likely that the word "free" cannot be applied to them, in any of its senses.

I do not want to suggest, however, that the spontaneous terrorist is simply a criminal. His violence is done *without right,* yet it expresses a rage which may well be justified. It warns us of the existence of a class of men, in whose condition we are implicated, whom we cannot easily judge. They are neither wholly within nor wholly outside the political community; they are estranged but not strangers, our fellow citizens and our nearest enemies. Since we cannot grant their freedom to kill us, we must face up to the causes of their rage.

Political terrorism is very different: it is random aggression *with* another aim, and so to be judged at least partly in conventional means-ends terms. The political terrorist is also to be judged, as I shall try to show, by the way he is within the political community, the precise forms of his membership and his estrangement. In this sense, terrorism seems almost appropriate to secessionist movements, since it serves to shatter the minimal moral cohesion of the community, and this is precisely what the secessionists want to do and claim a right to do. That is a right they may have, and can only have, if the community has already failed to include them, if they are within it only as objects of radical exclusion, brutality, and humiliation. It is at least possible to imagine oppression so severe that terrorism aimed systematically at political division might be morally defensible. The price is high, however, for the use of terror is likely to have divisive and demoralizing effects upon the oppressed men and women whose interests it supposedly serves as well as upon the larger community. It undermines their confidence in mass action, that is, in their own action, and invites them passively to watch what must be called a degrading spectacle—degrading especially if they vicariously enjoy it. Nor will it be easy for the oppressed to free themselves from the activists whom their passivity enfranchises: an elite of assassins who may one day claim to have set them free.**

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* Richard Wright's *Native Son* is the best description I have seen of the rage of the oppressed exploding in violence.

† "Rise and Slay!" November 1967.

** A number of people who read this article in manuscript have asked me to place the Black Panthers within its formal argument. I don't find this easy to do. Certainly, some of the Panthers advocate political terrorism, and, perhaps, hope to become terrorists themselves, American counterparts of the FLN or Al-Fatah. But I doubt that these hopes have been realized—whether because of political weakness or moral scruples, I cannot tell. The current political line of the Panthers calls only for "self-defense," though it is not clear whether or not this involves a repudiation of Huey Newton's earlier (1967) statements that policemen might be "executed while sipping coffee." The point is obvious, but it is probably worth saying that such "executions" would not constitute self-defense at all, but acts of terror (and murder). So far as I can tell from newspaper accounts, most of the recent violence in which Panthers have been involved has been defensive on their part. It's difficult to draw any other conclusion from the implausible stories the police tell after almost every shoot-out. But the Panthers pay the price of their loose talk in that many of us can't be sure.

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These arguments apply as well to a dispersed minority seeking a different sort of liberation, except that now there is no possibility at all of a symmetry of moral and political division. Whenever it is intended that oppressed and oppressor groups live together as equals and that political unity be preserved, terrorism must be rejected out of hand. And it is usually the position of activists on behalf of oppressed (and dispersed) minorities that coexistence of some sort is possible, once freedom and equality have been won. They commit themselves, then, to the political community, not as it is, but as it might be, *with its present population*. That commitment can take as many forms as there are projects for a new state. Whatever its form, it seems to me to preclude the murder of randomly selected, specifically innocent men and women. For these are potential citizens, with whom the terrorist is, or pretends to be, or plans to be, united.

But I want to argue more than this, beginning again with the special condition of the people I am considering: they are oppressed *citizens;* they are *formally* free and equal. I have suggested that activists working on their behalf ought to exploit the formal rules of the democratic system. Now insofar as they do this, or rather, insofar as they do it with some success, they begin the process of transforming their citizenship into something real (something valuable as well). That means also that they begin acquiring obligations within the democratic state where they work and to its citizens among whom they find allies and supporters. At the same time, however, their obligations continue to be mediated by the patterns of responsibility that exist within the world of the oppressed. The result is a situation of extraordinary complexity, sometimes of deep personal agony, which I can only outline here. The activist takes advantage of democratic rules in order to expose their hypocrisy. But if the rules yield advantages, they are not entirely hypocritical. Then they must be respected, and first of all by the activist. If he respects them too much, however, if he settles comfortably into the political community, he forgets the men and women on whose behalf he is working; he is accused, perhaps rightly, of selling out. He must frequently move beyond the range of actions normally sanctioned by democratic rules in order to extend their application to the whole of the oppressed group. He may move far beyond the normal range, accepting whatever risks this involves. Yet if he acts to undermine the rules themselves, he benefits no one; he makes future action more difficult. Then he breaks faith both with the oppressed and with his fellow citizens.

The "liberty to appeal to heaven" exists only when heaven is the only appeal. So long as activists on behalf of the oppressed appeal in fact to other men and find channels available to do so, they incur obligations within the political community that makes the appeal possible. This is what it means, the least that it means, to act within a democratic system: that one is bound to respect the general freedom to act and the lives of all possible actors. These, however, are minimal obligations, and with respect to any further political duties, the oppressed are in a special and very difficult position—one that may best be defined by suggesting that they possess, within the state, the liberty to refuse, to say no to the laws they have not been able to join in making. They possess the liberty to refuse because they have themselves been refused full participation in the democratic community. The activists, on the other hand, begin to say yes, and I have tried to elucidate the moral consequences of a struggle against oppression that utilizes (successfully) the possibilities of an open political system. But so long as oppression persists, oppressed men and women retain the right, not to destroy the democratic state or to make war against it, but to deny it what they have to give: their loyalty, service, and obedience. Activists on their behalf are free to repeat this refusal and to organize it in the struggle.

There are options open to them, then, that are closed to every other group of political men. If I have stressed the fact that these are limited options, I have not meant to deny their reality, but only to respond to the "mistaken theory" and common cant that the oppressed are right whatever they do. In fact, of course, the oppressed may rightly do more (and differently) than I suggest. For the liberty that is theirs belongs to them as a group, by virtue of their oppression, while the obligations belong only to those among them who choose to be active in the political community. Liberty is passively "enjoyed," while obligations are incurred through action. And this suggests the possibility of a kind of action that avoids the obligations I have described by avoiding any use of democratic politics. Thus an honest revolutionary, though he may not "work effectively for the oppressed" and so may fail in his duty to them, never breaks faith with the other citizens of the state. He is simply and avowedly their enemy (and his war may or may not be just). It cannot be said that the "liberty to appeal to heaven" exists only when heaven is the only appeal *that can be made*. It exists only when heaven is the only appeal *that is made*.

But the honest revolutionary is an unlikely and in fact a rare figure in a democratic state. More common is the man who uses the open arena of political life to express his terrible anger, to talk loosely of violence and revolution. Of him it must be said that he has a right to talk—that is what the arena is for—but if he ever acts out his words, he will act wrongly. Most of the time he just talks, for he does not have the power to act. Then people like myself worry about what he is saying and, hopelessly and perhaps presumptuous-

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ly, try to tell him what he should and should not do. The important question, of course, is what we should and should not do. That, however, is much easier to answer.

THE ARGUMENT that the oppressed are right whatever they do has as its practical corollary the argument that they cannot be criticized whatever they do. So men who otherwise speak and write a great deal are sometimes led to keep silent, and sometimes, perhaps, silence is our best choice. I have already urged this choice in the case of the spontaneous violence of the oppressed: we neither praise nor blame someone like Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas. With regard to premeditated action or to literary or ideological creativity (not Bigger Thomas, but *Native Son*), we cannot so easily be silent. And if we speak at all, we can hardly refrain from criticism. Criticism, in all its senses, is simply the mode of our speech. The implicit pledge any intellectual makes to his readers is that he will criticize, is criticizing, freely and honestly. This pledge may be mediated by a variety of agencies, magazines, publishing houses, theaters, and so on, that promise their audience something more: relevance, propriety, fashion, this or that political creed. But no one buys a magazine or comes to the theater expecting to be deceived, whatever his other expectations; he does not read a book in order to see important questions avoided. He expects writers and artists to tell whatever truth they know. He is counting on their judgments as a guide to his own thought and action. If they lie or conceal what they know or decline to commit themselves at all (even in the complex and ambiguous ways that are their prerogative and perhaps their necessity), they are breaking faith. They are breaking faith, however noble their reasons.

Two of the most common reasons do not seem to me noble at all. It is often said, first, that criticizing the politics or ideology of the oppressed plays into the hands of their oppressors. In fact, the precise opposite is true. The best possible movement of the oppressed requires the best possible criticism—dispassionate, tireless, utterly honest. "There is no greater crime," wrote Trotsky, "than deceiving the masses, palming off defeats as victories and friends as enemies . . . fabricating legends." When new mystifications replace the old, there is no end to oppression.

The second argument requires not that we lie but that we refrain altogether from criticism: only the oppressed, it is said, can understand their own condition and judge the appropriateness of their own response. Here the intellectual of the "oppressor" culture defers to his "oppressed" colleague. He candidly confesses his moral incapacities. But candor in this regard is something less than faithfulness. Thus Richard Gilman in a review of Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*:

> In its victories of understanding, its blindness and incompletions, its clean or inchoate energies, its internal motives and justifications [Cleaver's] writing remains in some profound sense not subject to correction or emendation or, most centrally, approval or rejection by those of us who are not black. . . . We want to be able to say without self-consciousness or inverted snobbery that such and such a Negro is a bastard or a lousy writer, but we are nowhere near that stage.*

If Gilman means that Negroes are free to write badly, the point is indisputable; they are as free as any of us are. If he means that we (white intellectuals) cannot tell when they do write badly, he must speak for himself; they are, after all, writing in a language they share with the rest of us, choosing words and phrases whose meanings we know. They do not have or even claim to have a private language.† If he means that we cannot judge what they say, then he is evading his responsibility as a critic. A writer like Cleaver is not discussing esoteric issues, but common and vital issues that have been discussed before, well and badly, by whites and blacks alike. If he means, finally, that we have no right to criticize black writers (even if we are able), then he has a strange idea of the commitment of an intellectual. I should have thought he had no right to publish an uncritical review. Surely a reviewer owes to his author the most sympathetic reading he is capable of and to his readers the clearest description of his literary and moral response.

When an intellectual writes about the oppression of others, he must imitate the Jews at the Passover *seder* and imagine that he too was a slave in Egypt. When he writes about an oppressive government, however committed he may be against it, he must imagine that he too was an Egyptian. Such imaginings are hard—I suspect the second is easier for most intellectuals—and we must be suspicious whenever the result is a merely facile empathy or "understanding." For it is not just the feelings of the others, but their situation, ideology, arguments, and choices, that must be imaginatively entered into and intellectually joined. The possibility of doing this, for all the difficulties involved and the likely failures, establishes the right of criticism. Having made the effort, the intellectual must report the results, revealing his own "victories of understanding . . . blindness and incompletions." His readers are waiting, and they need to know.

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* "White Standards and Negro Writing," *New Republic*, March 9, 1969. For a critique similar to my own, see Jervis Anderson, "Race, Rage & Eldridge Cleaver," COMMENTARY, December 1968.

† Compare Sartre on Fanon: "An ex-native, French-speaking, bends that language to new requirements, makes use of it, and speaks to the colonized only . . ." *The Wretched of the Earth*, Preface. But he speaks French; and if he did not, he would be translated (his language is available for translation). No writer who publishes his work can choose his readers—or his critics.

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On Lea Goldberg & S. Y. Agnon

Robert Alter

THE EARLY weeks of 1970 saw the passing of two remarkable Hebrew writers, one, S. Y. Agnon, who had achieved wide international recognition, the other, Lea Goldberg, scarcely known outside Israel. Although in this case one might invoke with real justice the eulogistic formula that their deaths mean the "passing of an era," they are such incommensurate figures in every respect that they represent the end of two different eras, two vastly disparate cultural experiences. Agnon was the last great Hebrew writer steeped in the religious ambience of East European Jewish life, from which he drew the elements of a distinctive artistic vocabulary, subtly illuminating that ambience in his fiction, making its erosion from within and its demolition from without the imaginative ground of reference for a large, troubled vision of impaired spiritual existence in the modern world. Lea Goldberg, on the other hand, a gifted poet, translator, and scholar-critic, grew up in a secularized European Hebrew milieu, her relation to modern culture was far more cosmopolitan, and Agnon's anguished problematic of tradition and modern experience remained outside her universe of discourse. The two writers, moreover, are clearly incommensurate in regard to stature as well. Agnon, with his varied and compellingly original literary production, is the undisputed major figure of modern Hebrew fiction, the only Hebrew novelist who can be justly claimed as a modern master. Lea Goldberg, alongside Agnon, would have to be described as "minor," though an attentive reading of her work may suggest the inadequacy of that term, with its common, regrettable implication of casual dismissal.

Agnon's earliest stories were published in the first decade of this century, and most of his major work had already appeared in Hebrew by the mid-40's, but it was not until 1954, with the publication of an essay on him by Edmund Wilson in the *New Yorker*, that he really began to receive any serious attention in America. Since then, of course, that situation has changed significantly, especially after the award of the Nobel Prize to Agnon in 1966. He is no longer an unfamiliar figure to American readers, and particularly because he has been discussed in these pages several times over the past decade,* I would here like to consider instead the lesser-known work of Lea Goldberg. Before doing so, however, let me note that with the passage of time more of Agnon and on Agnon is being made available in English. Schocken Books has just issued a collection of his stories†—scandalously, after all these years, it is the first such volume to appear in English—which gives special weight to his expressionist, experimentally symbolic tales, perhaps a welcome change to many American readers who may have had difficulties with the unfamiliar world of erudite piety of his more traditional fiction. One can hope that before too long we will see an English version of his major novel, *Just Yesterday*, one which will not be the kind of stylistic disaster that I. M. Lask and Misha Louvish, respectively, have perpetrated in their translations of his other two long novels *The Bridal Canopy* and *A Guest for a Night*.

Meanwhile, the English reader interested in Agnon can get informed guidance from two recent critical studies, Arnold J. Band's *Nostalgia and Nightmare*,** and Baruch Hochman's *The Fiction of S. Y. Agnon*.‡ Band's ambitious book begins with a "cultural biography" of Agnon during the formative years in his native Galician milieu, then offers a synoptic, chronological account of his literary enterprise. It is unfortunately hampered by a cumbersome method of exposition—each individual work is summarized in detail before it is discussed, and at times the dividing-line between synopsis and analysis is not as clear as one would like—but it does present a comprehensive view of Agnon's *oeuvre*, and Band has accomplished an important task neglected by Hebrew criticism in carefully sifting through all the versions of Agnon's stories to establish a precise chronology of his creative development. It was typical of Agnon's wiliness that he should hide the traces of his own revisions, suppress some published materials altogether, rearrange his collections of stories written over the years as though they had been conceived together as new artistic wholes. Band's painstaking research has at last cleared the way for an unimpeded view of the writer in his workshop.

Baruch Hochman's brief study makes a nice complement to Band's large volume because it is chiefly concerned with certain central discriminations of evaluation outside the purview of *Nostalgia and Nightmare*. What Hochman offers in essence is an essay on the ironic art of Agnon and its limita-

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* Robert Alter, "The Genius of S. Y. Agnon," August 1961; Edmund Wilson, "The Invisible World of S. Y. Agnon," December 1966; Baruch Hochman, "Agnon's Quest," December 1966; Gershom Scholem, "Reflections on S. Y. Agnon," December 1967.

† *Twenty-One Stories*, edited by Nahum N. Glatzer, 287 pp., $6.50.

** University of California Press, 563 pp., $15.00.

‡ Cornell University Press, 260 pp., $6.95.

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tions. Precisely for this reason, *The Fiction of S. Y. Agnon* is probably the most *intelligent* book anyone has written on Agnon, because Hebrew criticism, even at its anayltic best, has generally been so adulatory that it has failed to raise basic questions about the inherent limits of Agnon's kind of achievement. If Hochman can be faulted, it must be for unresolved ambivalence: he is fascinated by Agnon's virtuosity, and on occasion is quite illuminating in describing it critically, but at a number of points he seems driven to put Agnon down with a vehemence that looks excessive in the light of his own astute commentary on Agnon's art. In any case, *The Fiction of S. Y. Agnon* brings to bear on Agnon an unusual combination of sensitivity and critical shrewdness, and it is highly recommended as a brief introduction to the Hebrew writer.

IN AGNON'S death one inevitably senses the palpable gap in shared imaginative life when the unique energy of genius is cut off. On a more modest scale, the death of Lea Goldberg leaves a still space of felt absence in Israel because in her life she was so much a cultural presence there, and because her life marked a moment in culture that now seems irrevocably past, both in Israel and everywhere else. As I have intimated, she was not what one would call a commanding figure, but she managed to become a necessary one. She translated from half a dozen languages with grace and precision, everything from Petrarch and Shakespeare to Tolstoy and Brecht; she wrote children's poetry and stories with a warmth and lively inventiveness that have delighted a generation of young Hebrew readers; she initiated the study of comparative literature as an academic discipline in Israel; and, surely most important, one can say with some confidence of her what one would venture to say of very few contemporary poets anywhere—that she has written a good dozen poems, perhaps twice that many, which will continue to give pleasure in another hundred years.

Born in Kovno three years before the outbreak of World War I, educated there in one of the Hebrew *gymnasia* that were the last great institutional flowering of the Hebraist movement in Eastern Europe between the two wars, Lea Goldberg went on to study in Berlin and then in Bonn, where she received a doctorate in Semitics just as the reign of barbarism descended in 1933. Two years later she arrived in Tel Aviv, beginning adult life again in the unfamiliar white glare of an utterly new physical and cultural landscape—"it seems if you just turned your head," she would write later in a poem on Tel Aviv, 1935, "your hometown church would be floating out in the sea." At once she entered into the bustle of Tel Aviv literary activity, bringing with her a deep sense of at-homeness in European culture rare among the typically autodidact Hebrew writers of her generation and beyond the reach of the native generation that followed.

The movement of modern Hebrew literature, beginning in Enlightenment Germany and moving in stages eastward across Europe, had been conceived initially as part of a cosmopolitan vision of European culture: Hebrew was to emulate, but not slavishly imitate, the exemplary achievements of the various modern literatures and thus take its place in the creation of a new reasonable world of mutually respecting, civilized peoples. The vision, to be sure, was historically naive, and in any case the performance of Hebrew writers generally reduced the grand ideal to a pathetic slogan, but the ideal was not entirely a contemptible one for all that. Lea Goldberg, through her location in history, her personal peregrinations, her literary gifts, was one of the last people in a really advantaged position to translate into credible fact this vision of a Hebrew renaissance intimately and intricately associated with the whole varied range of European high culture.

In her memoir of the remarkable Viennese Hebrew poet, Avraham Ben Yitzhak Sonne (the friend of Hermann Broch, Arthur Schnitzler, Robert Musil, and others), Lea Goldbery wryly observes, "Listening to him, I would sometimes think, that's the way our intelligentsia ought to talk, if we had a Hebrew-speaking intelligentsia." This is just what she herself was—not exactly a literary intellectual in the American sense, not really an academician, and certainly not a "lady poet," but an authentic member of a Hebrew-speaking intelligentsia that existed more as an ideal than as a cultural fact. "Intelligentsia" may suggest, among other things, a self-conscious class of intellectuals impelled by a sense of social commitment or explicitly political identity, and of these qualities there was no lack among the European-born Hebrew literati. In Lea Goldberg's usage, however, the term also implies urbanity—in fact, she later invokes the English word to characterize Sonne—and few Hebrew writers have possessed that faculty of cultivated, discriminating discourse as she did.

THE VIRTUES of her literary criticism, and its limitations, are precisely those of good conversation. The beginning of her essay on Chekhov is exemplary: "It is hard to talk about Chekhov. Perhaps harder than about any other writer. He was so careful with the use of words, hated every superfluous word; and in speaking or writing about him there is a sense of uneasiness: one can hardly stint words, but in their profusion, many will seem superfluous." As an unaffected admission of critical humility before the mastery of the artist, this is perfect, and the ease of clear statement itself illustrates the interchangeability of writing and speaking that the writer assumes in her passing reference to them here. The essay that follows, like most of Lea Goldberg's criticism, is in keeping with this beginning—sensible, informed, persuasive, but finally less than illuminating. For all her literary intelligence and her minute knowledge of criticism and scholarship in the various Western languages, she seemed to shrink with a kind of aesthetic reticence from the spinning of theories, the erecting of systems of interpretation, the deployment of elaborate apparatuses of technical analysis, all those studied strategies and devices through which critics achieve, or aspire to, "brilliance." If as a re-

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sult her criticism often merely restates aptly what an intelligent reader could more or less see for himself, it has the compensating virtue of continuously preserving the notion of both literature and criticism as modes of humanistic discourse. The frequent, thoroughly natural use of the first person plural in her criticism is a clue to its distinctive quality: her "we" is not of the authoritative editorial variety, nor is it a rhetorical ploy to implicate the reader in the attitudes and conclusions of the writer, but, quite simply, it is spoken on behalf of all us human beings for whom and about whom another human being—Chekhov, Tolstoy, Boccaccio, or whoever the case may be—wrote a work of art to make some abiding sense of our shared human condition.

THE COMMITMENT to civilized discourse may also explain something about the nature of Lea Goldberg's poetry, which, written with the fullest awareness of the labyrinthine obliquities and bold discontinuities dominating modern poetic idiom, remained always direct, lucid, almost deceptively simple in form. She was a devoted student of the French, German, and Russian Symbolists, but the only poet close to the Symbolist movement she noticeably resembles is Verlaine, with his melodic orchestration of assonance, alliteration, and rhyme, his attachment to stanzaic forms, and the general attitude toward style he announced in his famous *Art Poétique*: "Take eloquence and wring its neck." Modern Hebrew poetry, freighted with allusion, rising against a vast background of biblical high style, had characteristically cultivated grand effects, pathos, passion, and prophetic rage, while Lea Goldberg brought to Hebrew verse a subtle sense of beauty in small words and small things, a gracefulness and even playfulness of style. Here, for example, is a little poem called "The Alley," one of a series of evocative vignettes of Lithuanian provincial life grouped together under the general title, *From My Old Home*. I have tried to offer in my translation some equivalent for the witty interplay of rhythm and rhyme in the original.

The alley is narrow.
Pail bumps pail.
A girl's laughter.
Scarlet ribbon-tail.

Flitted past,
Barefoot best.
Gray stone
Caressed.

I do not mean to imply that poetry for Lea Goldberg was in any way a flight from the horrors of history or the pain of adult life into a world of pretty little things. On the contrary, one senses in the quietly stated beauty of her brief lyric poems a certain tough strength precisely because that ordered beauty stands in tense relation with a dark background of chaos, ugliness, suffering. If she shows great fondness, at times to an excess, for the legacy of imagery of Romantic poetry and traditional folksong—setting suns, lonely birds in the sky, blossoming cherry trees, the murmur of strummed instruments—these traditional properties often seem freshly perceived and surprisingly persuasive because the poet has rediscovered them, somehow through inner struggle has won back from the chaos of modern experience the recurrent objects of eternal beauty. Blood-madness and death wait in the shadow of the flowering cherry tree, which is why we are ready to believe that the tree—"a white storm of florescence"—is really there for the poet, not simply an easy invocation of literary tradition.

In this regard, Lea Goldberg's single ventures into drama and fiction, her play, *The Mistress of the Castle*, and her novel, *That Is the Light*, make explicit a pattern that is implicit, or has already been worked through psychologically, in the best of her poems. The fictional settings and imaginative modes of the two works are very different: the play deals with a young survivor of the Holocaust during the immediate postwar period in a manner that tends toward melodrama and quasi-allegorical schematization, while the novel, incorporating more obviously autobiographical elements, is a subdued realistic account, rendered from the protagonist's point of view, of a 1931 summer spent at home in a Lithuanian town by a troubled young girl who has been off studying in Berlin. Yet the underlying movement of plot in the play and the novel is essentially the same. In each case, a sensitive girl, not yet come of age, has been confronted by the adult world with personal and historical facts of terror that tempt her to choose madness—seen as a virtual suicide—rather than adult life. In each case, the protagonist finally resolves, in the words of the novel, that "our lives will be life . . . in utter defiance of all the makers of history who torture children and murder their parents." Interestingly, in each case it is a piece of poetry—in the play, a children's song, in the novel, a remembered line from Moses Ibn Ezra—that the protagonist clings to as a talisman to help her out of the nightmare of violated childhood into a hoped-for world of light.

The simplicity, then, of Lea Goldberg's language represents in part an almost ascetic avoidance of any stylistic intimations of sublimity or profundity or exaltation that have not been fully earned by the poet through her experience. Her own *art poétique* is spelled out in this passage from a late poem, "On Myself," where musings on the nature of the poetic act—a recurrent concern in her verse—merge with self-revelation:

I have no hard words—
Valves of hallucination.
My images are
Transparent like church windows
Through which
One can see
The changing of light in the sky
And the falling
Like dead birds
Of my loves.

The apparent incongruity of the metaphor in the second line here is purposeful, ironically expressing a suspicion that poems with grand visionary qualities use language as an ingenious mechanical apparatus to produce what may finally be trick effects. The poet's own imagery, by contrast, has the simple function of stained glass, to let in the plain light of day, only coloring and patterning what is "out there" with the significant forms of a traditional art. (One thinks of George Herbert's "Church Windows.") The controlled statement

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of personal loss in these lines is typical of Lea Goldberg at her best: avoiding the sentimentalism of self-pity and the extravagance of self-dramatization, she expresses pain in a way that is at once chastened and almost blunt, depending for its strong effect only on its final placing and on the plummeting rhythm of the last words.

IF THERE is an element of starkness in her late work that does not entirely typify the earlier poems, her poetic style on the whole is nevertheless spare, understated, at some weaker moments perhaps too given to easy musicality and obvious conventional imagery, but for the most part orchestrating avowedly traditional materials with exquisite tact. Thus, at the beginning of one of her reminiscent poems about the Lithuania of her childhood: "Servant girls singing like guitars,/Barefoot, with the setting sun." There is no effort to surprise here, nothing of the typically modern tendency to give individual images and words a quality of violent autonomy, no element in this line and a half that is not drawn from the repertory of familiar poetic tradition. Yet the elements are adjusted together to achieve a finely luminous effect, producing the kind of total poetic phrase that lingers in the ear of the imagination.

What makes this poetry, however, more than a judicious synthesis of traditional materials is the faculty of immediate vision it clearly exhibits. It is a quality easier to see in the poetry itself than to describe, so I will offer two final examples to illustrate how the imagination seems to perceive poetic objects directly rather than labor to contrive them into poetry. The first poem is called "Night":

The sky sways in the wind,
Like a tree shaking its leaves
Stars shake,
Green and damp
And their scent—wild grass.

The sky sways in the wind—
And we below
Behold the flowering:
Now, now . . .
Did you hear?
In the skytop
The rustling of stars is distraught.

Most poems which, like this one, pursue a single metaphorical comparison from beginning to end have the effect of turning the comparison into a conceit, or, at any rate, clearly represent the "elaboration," as we say, of a central metaphor. Here, the perception of stars as leaves—with its double suggestion that the vault of the sky is within hand's reach and, disturbingly, is shaken by the same winds that sweep the unstable earth—seems rather an immediate experience, not consciously elaborated but followed from moment to moment; so that "Did you hear?" near the end is not a rhetorical affectation but a cry that springs from the immediacy of what is seen.

My last example is somewhat more complicated. One of a group of poems with the Rimbaudesque title, "Illuminations," its two stanzas would appear to stand in a relation of parable and meaning, but that relation is not made explicit, and each remains an independent moment of revelation, overlapping the other, extending its possibilities of implication.

Across one of the hills
Flies an orange bird
Whose name I do not know.
But the olive trees know her,
The wind, pursuing her, sings:
Your home is here.

In the eyes of a small Arab girl
At the edge of the village in ruins
An orange bird flutters
Whose name I do not know.

This is one of those rare instances in which ultimately political facts have been transmuted into the fuller and more subtle mode of meaning of poetic statement. The lines linger over the ambiguities of estrangement and belonging; express the speaker's troubled sense of unnavigable distance between herself and the bird, the landscape, the Arab girl; encompass suffering in an almost painterly image of beauty—the bright bird against the somber gray-green of the olive trees—that does not prettify the suffering but, on the contrary, reveals it more sharply, leads us to ponder its enigmatic intimations.

Lea Goldberg was herself heavily burdened with the awareness of how difficult it is to go on with poetry in a world that brutally violates every object of poetic desire and every image of poetic order. Many of her late poems are meditations on silence ("All my psalms were slaughtered./ All my words/ Were killed./ Even the name of this stone on my mouth/ I cannot pronounce"); and in fact during the last four or five years of her life she virtually stopped writing poetry. This is another facet of the affinity she felt for Avraham Ben Yitzhak Sonne, whose minuscule production is the purest example in Hebrew literature of a movement toward *écriture blanche*, actually ending in a beautiful hymn to wordlessness. In this connection, there is one especially unsettling passage in Lea Goldberg's book on him. Commenting on Nietzsche's poem, "On the Bridge in Venice," which ends with the words, "*Hörte mir jemand zu?*," Sonne observed to Lea Goldberg: "Poetry seeks an echo but no longer finds it. That question-mark after the cry remains unanswered. From this point, the debacle begins. Language has had its day, behind it there is nothing more." The debacle has indeed begun. It is hard to imagine a serious poet now who does not feel compelled in one way or another to ask himself Nietzsche's question, whether there is anyone to listen to him, and the fear that it is all over with language itself cannot be very far from any of us.

Language, however, no matter how we blunt it, maim it, degrade it, prostitute it, remains the uniquely human invention, and therefore poetry, as the most complex expressive ordering of langauge, remains an indispensable human activity. It is suggestive that the major poet of the Israeli war generation, Yehuda Amichai, recalls in a poem on Lea Goldberg's death that during the Negev campaign of 1948, he carried with him everywhere in his battle-pack a pamphlet edition—battered, held together with scotch tape—of *From My Old Home*. What Lea Goldberg's poetry has meant to many Hebrew writers and readers is itself testimony to the tough persistence of this most fragile form of human discourse.

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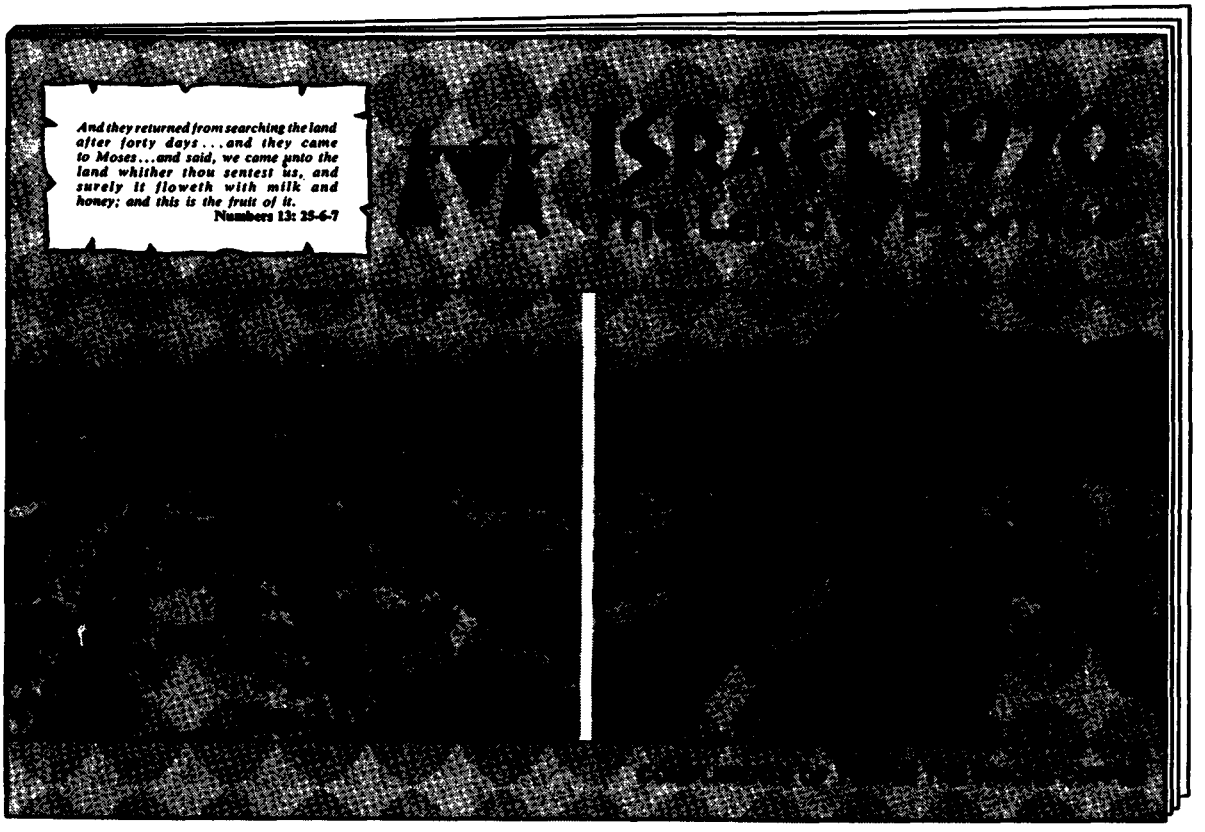
And they returned from searching the land after forty days . . . and they came to Moses . . . and said, we came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.
Numbers 13: 25-6-7

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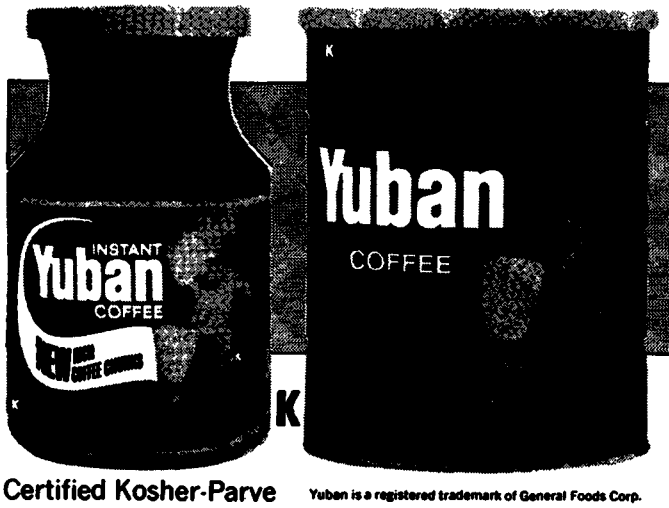

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Man in Culture

MR. SAMMLER'S PLANET. By SAUL BELLOW. *Viking. 313 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by IRVIN STOCK

A REMARKABLE feature of Saul Bellow's career is that it is a kind of model of organic growth, his novels both alike and different, like a human being getting older. Their differences have been easier to see first—an intellectual's journal, a tight Kafkaesque nightmare, a loose, expansive, high-spirited picaresque tale, an African adventure story, and so on. But the novels are profoundly alike too, because from the start Bellow has had the luck to know what he most deeply cherishes, and he has clung to that knowledge against all the batterings of experience and all the seductions of intellectual sophistication. Each of his novels has asked: How can I hold onto the feeling, acquired in my (Jewish) childhood, that I am a precious soul and that life is full of beautiful promise? How can I hold onto this feeling when both experience and thought in our time seem to have turned it into a joke, and maturity seems to mean precisely the ability to see through the joke?

Bellow's protagonists (each, however vividly individualized, a version of himself) have always fought against such maturity. To accept the idea that we are nothing special, and that the "nobility" that thrills us in history books is no longer among our possibilities—this, for Bellow, has always meant "to die," while "to live"—the phrases recur almost obsessively—has meant to be stirred to joyous activity by a faith that inspires, the faith that the self we imagine in our happiest moments can be real. ("Imagination is a force of nature," said Dahfu in *Henderson the Rain King*. "It converts to actual. It sustains. It alters. It redeems.") What that life-giving faith asserts is that we do have a "separate destiny" (Joseph, in *Dangling Man*); that "the eternal . . . bonded onto us . . . calls out for its share" (Henderson); that we can be "marvelous" (Herzog). It is the faith of the early Romantics—Blake, Wordsworth, Keats—whose ideas in fact suffuse Bellow's novels.

To this point, however, another must be added. Bellow is unique among American novelists not only because he has always clung to an unfashionably sunny faith, the faith of the child, but because he has been at the same time more heavily burdened with adult knowledge and thought than any American novelist since Melville. And in all his stories knowledge and thought tend to mock that faith, sometimes defeating it, sometimes merely complicating it.

ONE WAY to get at what is new in *Mr. Sammler's Planet* would be to say that in it the Romantic faith of Bellow's earlier novels might appear, at first glance, to have been abandoned. The book seems to be, in large part, an attack on a generation of Americans which is trying to stay "alive" in Bellow's own sense of the word—to have a separate destiny, to be marvelous, just as his former heroes have done. Clinton Trowbridge has remarked that the Romantic Bellow has here turned suddenly "neo-classic," and some reviewers, less kind, have called the book ungenerous and reactionary.

In my opinion, however, Bellow has done something far more interesting in *Mr. Sammler's Planet* than to reverse himself. He has, it is true, moved from where he used to be: instead of the predictable repetition of old stances to which novelists incapable of growth tend to sink, he has tried, with unusual directness, to give expression to the new experience of a new time. But the fact is that the changes in emphasis which this novel dramatizes are changes required for Bellow to remain loyal, in this new time, to what has mattered most to him from the start. Today's rebellious young are indeed loud in proclaiming Bellow's own sense that each individual is precious and deserves a chance for rich fulfillments. But it is an old story that a good cause may be in danger from its own champions, and what Bellow is now trying to show is how the most prevalent ways of asserting that belief are actually, for reasons that lie deep in the recent development of Western culture, ways of caricaturing it, vulgarizing it. Now we have to grant, of course, that this is the work of a middle-aged man, and that Bellow's protagonist is his oldest yet, a man in his seventies. But the distinction of *Mr. Sammler's Planet* is precisely that it is an embodiment, beautifully adequate to its subject, of the wisdom of Bellow's middle age.

To express this new perspective, and to judge from it the new age, Bellow has created a protagonist different from his others, as well as like them, in appropriate ways. Artur Sammler is a Polish Jew who was spoiled by well-to-do parents as a child, and who, as a young man, fell in love with English reasonableness and good manners (he was a friend of H. G. Wells)—in short, he was shaped, like earlier Bellow heroes, to expect good things of himself and others. But later there came a moment when he climbed naked and half-blinded out of a mass grave of Nazi victims, leaving behind the corpse of his wife. And soon after this he, in his turn, killed a German soldier he had disarmed and stripped—killed him deliberately, and with intense pleasure. For the rest of his life he struggles against the message there delivered to him, "that reality was a terrible thing, and the final truth about mankind overwhelming and crushing."

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It is a message renewed, of course, again and again, not only among the bloated corpses Sammler saw as an elderly journalist in the Sinai desert in 1967, but equally on New York's upper Broadway, where it seems "the implicit local orthodoxy." But he fights it. Mainly it is "a vulgar and cowardly conclusion, rejected . . . with all his heart." Now he is living in New York on the charity of a rich doctor nephew, uncomfortable at what he sees around him, but hesitant to judge, increasingly fed up with "explanations"—to make "distinctions" is what he prefers—his favorite reading the work of Meister Eckhart, the medieval German mystic for whom the comfort of God requires that we abandon the false comfort offered us by His creatures. Yet others keep turning to Sammler as himself a source of mysterious comfort (even while his old-fashioned good manners make them smile): he remains hopelessly involved, through love as well as duty, with those same creatures. And the private vocation he has turned to in the leisure of old age is the search for "short views," a phrase of Sidney Smith's which, as Sammler uses it, generally means condensed conclusions about "some essence of experience," and which keeps recurring as the new hunger of his mind.

SAMMLER'S, THEN, is the ripest intelligence Bellow has ever invented, a man educated not only by books, for he has learned at first hand the chief lessons of our time. And though the novel resembles *Herzog*, in that its story comes to us entirely through its hero's idiosyncratic Jewish responses, and his wide-ranging memories and reflections, what makes it quite different is that it is actually just the sort of "condensation" a Mr. Sammler would have ordered. Action, memories, reflections are not here an image of the turbulence of life, but always in league with each other and building forward, each of the six chapters clearly a unit in a theme's development. The story is, in fact, an account of a series of confrontations between the elderly humanist and a group of characters chosen to represent the current *Zeitgeist*. And these confrontations are given increasing urgency and point by a classic philosophical challenge that haunts them all—that is, by Sammler's struggle, through the tale's few days, to find some "word" to bring his dying nephew that might oppose the negation of death. (The nephew, rich in part with Mafia abortion money, has been no angel. But Sammler recognizes in him a man "assigned" to feel, especially for others—to reach out, please, help, as if the world were a family. And for this he loves him.)

There is, first of all, the new sexual morality, represented by Angela, the dying man's daughter, who has been set free by her beauty and her father's wealth for a "Roman" paganism of sexual behavior. *She* calls "perverse" not the "erotic business in Acapulco" that occurred when she and her fiancé played switch with some beach acquaintances, but his sudden jealousy afterward. Her brother Wallace is equally familiar—a "high-I.Q. moron," who "finds out how to put things together . . . as he goes along," as in "action-painting," and whose one persistent motive seems to be to show his father that he can make it on his own, and that he can't—for his brilliant beginnings always end in failure that looks deliberately courted. Wallace's resemblance to Augie March, who also refused to let himself be pinned down or to risk, by accepting some limiting job or function, "a disappointed life," is symptomatic of Bellow's changed perspective. Augie, though he had his troubles, also had his author's sympathy. Wallace, unwilling to accept limits or models of being imposed by others, and yet incapable of respecting for long those chosen by himself, is clearly a failure and a waste.

Then there is Feffer, a Columbia University student who represents the type who does make it. He is a clever promoter for whom ends justify means and liberal sentiments are quite enough for a good conscience. Feffer cons Sammler into lecturing on Bloomsbury to a Columbia crowd gathered to hear about Sorel on violence, an affair that ends in what is at this moment in history a familiar disaster. A "thick-bearded, but possibly young" member of the New Left, offended by an irony quoted from Orwell, stops the talk with, "Hey! Old man! . . . That's a lot of shit!" and some remarks about Sammler's dry balls.

Finally, there is Sammler's son-in-law Eisen, an Israeli avant-garde painter and sculptor, in whom we are shown what is now happening both to Jews and to artists. Like Sammler, he is a survivor of the Holocaust, but he is one who has willingly, even happily, embraced the cynical lesson that Sammler struggles to resist. As an artist, he paints living people as corpses: by this gimmick of a death-oriented outrageousness he gives to creative impotence a hectic pseudo-potency. As a Jew, he crushes skulls, when it seems reasonable to do so, without any crippling tremors of doubt or remorse. "You were a Partisan," he says, when the old man, in a scene I will sketch in a moment, protests in horror that he might have gained his end less bloodily. "You had a gun. So don't you know? . . . If in—in. No? If out—out? Yes? No? So answer." In Eisen the traditional allegiances of both Jew and artist—to life, to man—have been reversed. And he now goes after personal development and distinction—an American "*karyera*"—with the greedy single-mindedness of the ethically "liberated."

THE BOOK is strewn with Mr. Sammler's reflections on what all these confrontations imply—on the "individuality boom" that has resulted from the increase of freedom and the dread of "futurelessness"; on the drive to be "real" that has merely replaced traditional human models with "dime-store" models out of recent literature and Hollywood; on the resort to madness in order to demonstrate availability for "higher purposes," which purposes "do not necessarily appear"; on the "non-negotiable" demands for instant gratification made by people who, refusing to admit any limitations on the possible, are doomed to humiliating misery and dangerous rages. But the opening chapter's presentation of what is hap-

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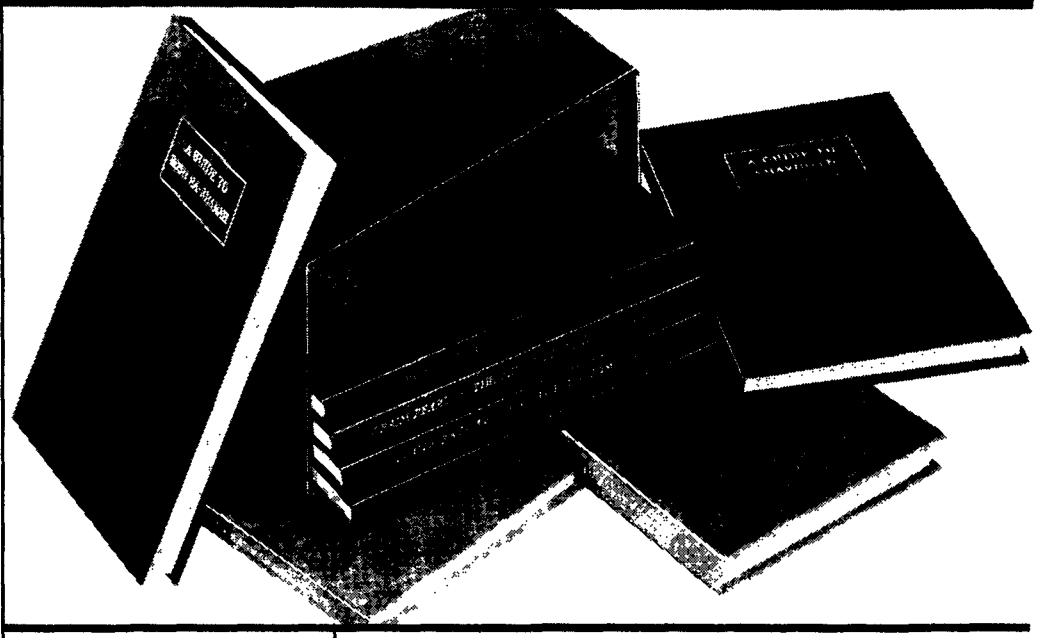

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pening to Mr. Sammler's planet is completed by the introduction of two characters who, though they too represent the new age, are types of the human he can respect. First, there is a tall, gorgeously dressed black pickpocket. Having caught Sammler watching him in action, the black follows the frightened old man into his hotel lobby, presses him to a wall, and displays, in significant silence, his massive penis. Immediately after this warning, Sammler finds in his room a manuscript work on "The Future of the Moon," stolen for him by his half-mad daughter from an Indian scientist, Dr. V. Govinda Lal. Reading its first line, "How long will this earth remain the only home of man?" he closes the chapter with the silent cry, "How long? Oh Lord, you bet! Wasn't it the time—the very hour to go? . . . To blow this great blue, white, green planet, or to be blown from it."

The values represented by the black man—lawlessness, sexual potency, self-delight—may well have influenced mid-20th century youth. But as the story proceeds, Sammler becomes aware that he is, in fact, like Sammler himself, an outsider and the new generation's victim. The pickpocket stole because "he took the slackness and cowardice of the world for granted." Puma-like, *eine Natur* (Goethe's respectful phrase), he was mad, if at all, "with an idea of noblesse." Indeed, Feffer, hearing about him, is thrilled, as by a "sudden glory." But Feffer's response to the "glory" is to photograph the thief in action for magazine exploitation. And when the black struggles with him for the camera and Sammler asks Eisen to help, that new-type Jewish artist coolly smashes the black's face with a bag of his crazy sculpture. It is the black who gets Sammler's passionate sympathy, the others his horrified rage.

As FOR Lal, Bellow has created in him a genuinely brilliant man of science, and, improbable though it may seem, the twenty-nine pages of philosophic dialogue which follow his meeting with Sammler are a moving and exciting fictional climax. Lal, for whom nature, "more than an engineer, is an artist," is no mere opposite to Sammler; yet they differ on one point that relates to the novel's center. Lal is ready to call it quits on man's long struggle to make a home on this planet. For him space travel is not only the inevitable next step demanded by the human imagination. As an Indian, "super-sensitive to a surplus of humanity"—that is, already familiar with the future—he believes that refusal to make the voyages elsewhere which are growing possible would turn this crowded planet into a prison, and bring the human species, now "eating itself up," closer than ever to leaping into Kingdom Come. Moreover, amid the rigors of space and under the leadership of technicians endowed with their own kind of nobility, he believes that man may yet be disciplined into recovering lost virtues.

SAMMLER'S response is no simple disagreement. In fact, much of what he says is an anguished attempt to understand what has caused "the shrinking scope for the great powers of nature in the individual, the abundant and generous powers." But he feels that there is "also an instinct against leaping into Kingdom Come. . . . The spirit knows that its continued growth is the real end of existence." And crowded and disappointing though it is, his own planet is still, for him, a home he cannot—will not—give up. Why not? His answer to this question—what he has to offer in place of a defeatist departure into space or Kingdom Come—constitutes the point of the book.

Mainly, of course, the answer is himself. But, as I have suggested, it is dramatized in his struggle to find some "word" which will comfort his nephew in the hour of his death. The struggle is real, its desperateness is genuinely evoked, especially in the mounting excitement that precedes the end: in that scene of blood when Eisen's killer-reasoning "sinks his heart," and then in his final confrontation in the hospital with Gruner's sexy daughter. Risking her rage, he tries first to get Angela to feel what is now wanted—to put aside for once her own demands and grievances, to go to her father, say something, make some sign, at least, that will show she is sorry her behavior, of which he has heard, has caused him pain. But Angela, bold enough in other areas, naturally recoils from a scene so "hokey." ("You want an old-time deathbed scene . . . But how could I —It goes against everything. You're talking to the wrong person. . . . What is there to say?") A few seconds later Sammler himself, standing alone beside his nephew's body, utters his "word" in the silent heartbroken prayer that ends the novel:

> Remember, God [Sammler prays], the soul of Elya Gruner, who, as willingly as possible and as well as he was able, and even in suffocation and even as death was coming was eager, even childishly perhaps . . . to do what was required of him. At his best this man was much kinder than at my very best I have ever been or could ever be. He was aware that he must meet, and he did meet—through all the confusion and degraded clowning of this life through which we are speeding—he did meet the terms of his contract. The terms which, in his inmost heart, every man knows. As I know mine. As all know. For that is the truth of it —that we all know, God, that we know, we know, we know.

Here, then, is the new emphasis to which Bellow has been led by the new age (and his own new age). The mere assertion of individuality, the "non-negotiable" demand for one's own way, the leaps to ecstasy or "significance" that by-pass duties and commitments to others—such behavior debases the self it seeks to glorify. It is only by loyalty to the "human bond," to the "contract" implicit in our humanity, that we can safeguard our own sense of the self's value.

Indeed, as Sammler becomes aware during a moment of horror, to find oneself with *no other* to turn to in a time of need is "death," is to be "not himself. . . . Someone beween the human and not-human states, between content and void, meaning and not-meaning, between this

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world and no world. Flying, freed from gravitation, light with release and dread, doubting his destination, fearing there was nothing to receive him." For Sammler, a man who believes in God, even our sense of ultimate destinations and receptions depend on that "contract." The term implies a faith not merely in the fact of a "human bond," but also in our obligation to create it for each other. By looks, by signs, by words, we make this planet a home for each other, we make a web of relationships and meanings that reach even beyond the individual life and reduce even the terror of the unknown future.

But if Bellow has tried to body forth the idea of a "contract," he also makes clear that idea's terrible vulnerability. For Sammler, the young who cry "Shit!" to their elders do have a case. He is painfully aware, for instance, that the old attitudes toward sex were not a success, and that Angela's sexuality may well, as she cleverly observes, be the fulfilment of her father's repressed wishes. He knows too that to insist on a "bond," in a world so largely ruled by force, may be to support the inhibition of legitimate protest. Even Eisen's killer-reasoning was once —or so it seemed—Sammler's own.

The truth is that Sammler's final "word" is no comfortable triumph. At best, it is a battle won in a war that will never end. Or more exactly, it is an assertion of faith, and faith is half the mere will that things be so and so, asserted against the undying possibility that they may not be. But —we don't know everything. To swallow current "explanations" as the whole truth is to submit slavishly to ignoble reduction. There is in life an inexhaustible wealth of possibilities, and therefore freedom. In that freedom intuitions of decency may be entitled to respect. (I am, in part, paraphrasing Sammler, but Bellow had already said this in *The Victim*. "Choose dignity," declared the sage Schlossberg. "Nobody knows enough to turn it down.") If nothing in culture is born out of unmixed conditions or causes, yet graces do emerge out of the mixture, ideas of human decency which, though they may be "compromised," may also be our chief safeguards against the brutes. To spit on such ideas in all relations because they have been alibis for evil in some may be itself a brute's way of justifying brutishness.

Saul Bellow is pre-eminently the novelist of man-in-culture, man swimming in an ocean of ideas in which he often feels near to being swamped. ("There are moments," thinks Sammler, "when one lies under and feels the awful weight of accumulated consciousness. . . . Not at all funny.") But though, as is often pointed out, ideas in art can be deadening, the odd fact is that in Bellow's work they provide rather a source of fictional life, of drama. Bellow has a gift, reminiscent of Wordsworth, for evoking in his very sentence rhythms, as well as in his words, the *experience* of thought, the drama of its emergence out of the life of the whole man. Moreover, the ideas he presents are those of one who knows, in Sammler's words, "Once take a stand, draw a baseline, and contraries assail you. . . . All positions are mocked by their opposites." The thematic intentions his characters and plots are shaped to serve are therefore more likely to safeguard than to violate the mysteries of reality.

But there is a deeper reason for the emotional power of Bellow's thought, and for the uniquely intimate response he elicits from some of us. It is that he is concerned above all with *man*-in-culture, man swimming for his life among ideas, wincing at or delighting in them, and challenging them always to answer the naive, irrepressible demands of the feeling heart. He carries amid the richest complexities of modern consciousness the claims and standards of our ordinary humanity. It is perhaps here, more than in his idiom or his subject matter, that his Jewishness may be located—in the fact that he writes as a champion of the human, of humaneness; he writes out of that tenderness for the hard-pressed human creature which has traditionally been the Jew's strength, and his weakness. *Mr.*

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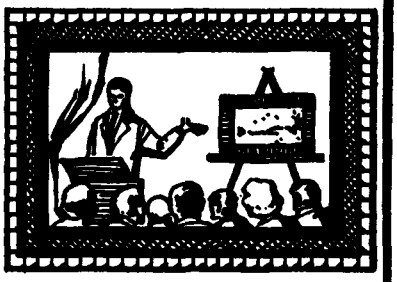

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Sammler's Planet is a beautiful defense of our common humanity against all the bogus idealism as well as the frank savagery that nowadays rejects it as "corn." For this reason it deserves, as I once wrote of his other novels, not merely admiration, but gratitude.

Judicial Activism

THE SUPREME COURT AND THE IDEA OF PROGRESS. By ALEXANDER M. BICKEL. *Harper & Row. 210 pp. $6.50.*

Reviewed by LEON FRIEDMAN

A LIBERAL Supreme Court can count on automatic criticism from the political Right. For example, following the Court's famous switch in 1937, and Roosevelt's wholesale appointment of New Deal judges, conservatives raised a hue and cry over the Justices' apparent eagerness to uphold Democratic legislation and champion minority rights. There was some clamor, too, from outside the political sphere, from the presumably non-partisan ranks of the academics and professionals. These critics, including lower-court judges, questioned the legal craftsmanship of the Roosevelt Court—in particular, the intellectual coherence of its opinions and the care with which the Justices considered the further implications of their decisions. In his private memoranda, Judge Learned Hand variously referred to the Justices of the 1940's as the Blessed Saints, Cherubim, and Seraphim; the Jolly Boys; the Nine Blameless Ethiopians; the Nine Tin Jesuses; or the Nine Blessed Chalices of the Sacred Effluvium. His cousin, Augustus Hand, also an outstanding federal appeals court judge, wrote about a criminal *habeas corpus* petition with similar scorn: "If we sanction writs like this we might as well give up and inaugurate a school to correspond with jail birds and employ a staff of Murphys and Rutledges [two liberal Justices] with proper psychiatrists to attend to all their needs. . . ."

The liberal Warren Court, in addition to the predictable opposition from the Right, also found itself subject to a kind of third-party criticism. Judge Calvert Magruder of the First Circuit Court of Appeals wrote in 1958: "Sometimes after we have given long study to a case and written a careful opinion, we find ourselves reversed by the Supreme Court in an opinion that strikes us as superficial and hastily prepared." In a series of scathing law-review articles, Herbert Wechsler of Columbia and Henry Hart of Harvard, two intellectual disciples of Felix Frankfurter, attacked the logic behind many Supreme Court decisions of the late 50's, pointing to a marked absence of "neutrality," and charging that troublesome issues were buried under a miasma of liberal rhetoric.

As TIME went by, even those lawyers and jurists who stood by the Warren Court's accomplishments in the field of civil liberties and minority rights began to question the steps by which the decisions were reached. For the most part, however, the liberals kept their doubts to themselves. The silence on the Left was broken only last year, by Alexander M. Bickel of the Yale Law School, in his Oliver Wendell Holmes lectures at Harvard, in which he undertook an analysis of the Court and its shortcomings, and created a considerable stir in the process. This published version affords the general reader an opportunity to see what the furor was all about.

Some of Bickel's charges, to be sure, have been aired before: the Warren Court misused historical evidence to support conclusions reached on other grounds; its civil-liberties rulings were marred by "subjectivity"; recent rulings on "political" cases suffered from a lack of adequate reasoning. Bickel, it should be remarked, invests this familiar litany with fresh insights; but his prime contribution is to take on the areas in which it has been generally acknowledged that the Court was most successful, the cases of which the Court itself was most proud, and to show how its grand principles deteriorated in the course of specific application.

THE THREE most important decisions handed down by his court, according to former Chief Justice Warren, were *Baker v. Carr* (the first reapportionment case), *Brown v. Board of Education* (school desegregation), and *Gideon v. Wainwright* (right to counsel in all criminal proceedings). The reapportionment decisions, establishing the populist principle of one-man, one-vote, were based on a theory of strict majoritarianism which in practice the Court was unable to apply consistently. It allowed the Georgia legislature, for example, to bypass the popular choice for governor in the recent election and choose Lester Maddox as the state's chief executive. As Bickel points out, the reapportionment decisions have given rise to the grossest form of gerrymandering and malapportionment; as a result of the Court's insistence on precise mathematical equality among districts, the states have redrawn district lines almost every other year, to the clear advantage of the incumbent political party. And contrary to theoretical expectation, the groups who stand to suffer most from strict majoritarianism are the poor, and particularly the poor blacks—the special wards of the Court in other instances—who have been locked into the central-city slums as a permanent minority. The solution, says Bickel in an extremely sophisticated political analysis, runs contrary to the Court's present policy. The premise of geographical districting and one-man, one-vote must yield to "constituency formation" and "constituency contraction" so that distinct racial and economic minorities can attain the political power to govern themselves.

School desegregation has presented similar problems. Underlying the *Brown* decision was the notion of the public school as—in Bickel's words—"a secular, nationalizing, assimilationist agency." Yet the impact of the integration decisions, he argues, has been to drive white students, and particularly the well-to-do, out of the public schools altogether, and to strand the minority poor in the

LEON FRIEDMAN *reviewed Jessica Mitford's* The Trial of Dr. Spock *in our December 1969 number.*

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midst of a crumbling system—"a strange destination for the most egalitarian of Courts to arrive at."

Rather than merely disestablishing legally-imposed segregation and attacking foot-dragging and bad faith on the part of recalcitrant school boards, the federal courts have interposed themselves in the smallest details of school administration. According to Bickel, the diverse patchwork of school problems throughout the nation makes it all but impossible to effect uniform court relief; what is needed are individualized plans for each district. However, the result of the latter approach "will be seen as an unequal application of law, as an encouragement of residential segregation," which may in turn produce a strong reaction against judicial intervention in this area. (Already this attitude is evident in the recent Congressional ban on busing and other plans for school integration.) Bickel believes that the only political response consistent with the Court's decisions is to create huge centralized school districts that can supply an ideal "mix" of white and black, rich and poor students. But this, of course, has become quite unthinkable today. Not only would such a proposal run counter to the decentralization plans urged by all civil-rights groups (who argue that centralized school boards would be run by the white majority) but also, the whites themselves are unwilling to shift their own children around to provide the desired "mix."

IN THE field of criminal law, the Court's insistence on adequate counsel at all stages of the proceedings—another landmark decision—ran into unforeseen difficulties when the Court had to specify which criminals the new ruling applied to. All prisoners, no matter when they were tried? Litigants whose appeals were still pending? Only those defendants tried after the date of the Court's decision? In a number of cases the Court opted for the last alternative. Bickel claims, however, that the distinction is "altogether arbitrary" and results in "plain injustice" for anyone already convicted or on

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appeal at the time of the Court's decision.

Even the Court's advances in the area of First Amendment rights come in for their share of criticism. Bickel acknowledges the Court's great contribution to liberalizing the obscenity laws, beginning with the *Roth* case in the late 50's, but he regards the Court's decision in the case of magazine editor Ralph Ginzburg as arbitrary and peevish. (The Court, it will be recalled, was so offended by the way Ginzburg advertised his wares that it punished him, in Bickel's words, "under a rule applicable to no one else, past or future. It made of Mr. Ginzburg an example that exemplifies nothing.")

Bickel points out, further, how the Court erred seriously in the draft-card burning cases: "When a man publicly burns or turns in his draft card, his purpose obviously is not to evade the draft. It is to communicate his protest. The act is senseless otherwise." Yet the Court blandly accepted the government's argument that it had a legitimate interest in forcing young men to carry the cards and ignored the serious First Amendment problems involved.

Moreover, when the Court, in 1966, declared all state poll-taxes unconstitutional, instead of justifying the result on First Amendment grounds, it blithely cited the one-man, one-vote cases without showing how they related to the poll-tax question. Even a sympathetic critic like Archibald Cox was forced to say that the Court's opinion appeared "almost perversely to repudiate every conventional guide to legal judgment." According to Bickel, the decision in *Katzenbach v. Morgan*, granting the right to vote to non-English-speaking Puerto Ricans in New York, was similarly devoid of intellectual justification.

Finally, Bickel feels that the very sweep of the Warren Court's efforts—the giant steps it took into so many areas—created serious counter-pressures:

> The Court's effectiveness . . . depends substantially on confidence, on what is called prestige. It is likely, therefore, . . . that there is a natural quantitative limit to the number of major, principled interventions the Court can permit itself per decade. Will anyone who is not in a revolutionary state of wholesale disillusionment with the society continue to believe that basic principle is in question if the Court puts it in question every other Monday? . . . Revolutionaries are not a reliable constituency for judges.

It is undoubtedly true, as Bickel argues, that many of the Court's troubles derived precisely from its assumption of responsibility for the progress of society. Whether this is a proper function of the judicial branch is a moot question. Bickel himself is willing to grant that "society . . . values the capacity of the judges to draw its attention to issues of the largest principle that may have gone unheeded in the welter of its pragmatic doing." But beyond that, he feels, the Court must move cautiously, refusing to implement major policies which the rest of society may question. The Warren Court sought to impel America toward the ideal of a factionless, secular, egalitarian society, and through such decisions as *Brown* and *Baker*, attempted to establish the legal rules whereby its vision might be realized. But now, it would seem, a significant majority of Americans have reached a point of resistance to further liberalization of existing institutions; and, as Bickel puts it, "in a vast complex, changeable society, the Court is a most unsuitable instrument for the formation of policy"—particularly a policy that the bulk of society no longer wants.

"The process of the coherent, analytically warranted, principled declaration of general norms alone justifies the Court's function," Bickel writes at one point. He proceeds, however, to demonstrate that behind every decision is an unarticulated premise about the direction of society, a political conclusion about the distribution of power, which the Justices do not, indeed cannot, openly express, any more than a Congressman is able to disclose all the considerations behind his proposals or votes. The Justices must instead maintain the myths about their limited power to interpret the Constitution, their need to defer to the other branches of government, and their reliance upon past decisions. The fact is, though, that the Court is a kind of legislature, with enormous power to move the political machine.

As such, the activist Court must inevitably "play politics." Judicial compromises, for instance, often occur for many of the same reasons that they do in Congress: society needs to be eased into new positions by limited steps, and diehard opinion must be appeased. Thus, when the court issued its *Miranda* decision on the right to counsel at the police station, it decided not to apply the ruling retroactively, which might have thrown open the jails for the release of hundreds of convicted murderers. Conservative opinion, already outraged by the new *Miranda* ruling, would never have tolerated such a thing. The decision of three "liberal" Justices —Warren, Brennan, and Fortas— to convict Ralph Ginzburg and Edward Mishkin for obscenity may also have been a gesture to the right wing following liberalization of the law in other areas. Bickel is right to criticize those who go through elaborate intellectual gyrations to justify, in traditional judicial terms, the Court's compromises or its new political stance. But the inconsistencies of the Warren Court, when all is said and done, were symptomatic not of faulty reasoning but of the dictates of power politics. For the Court to have refrained from deciding the difficult questions thrown its way would itself have been an act of political consequence. The elaborate system of judicial restraint built up by the Brandeis-Frankfurter school affords no greater guarantee of success in dealing with social problems than the frontal-attack methods of the Warren Court.

Bickel admits that "the principles the Court has adopted [in the school-desegregation and reapportionment cases] are not irrational, they are not unfit for judicial pronouncement; the Court did not pluck them out of thin air, they do connect with strands in the tradition of our society." That the bold rulings of the Warren Court solved neither the evils of school segrega-

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tion nor those of electoral abuse should not be regarded as its failure alone. For America has moved to a point where the legitimacy of all its institutions is under question, and the tentative answers offered by Congress or the Court are unacceptable to large segments of the population, Left, Right, and in between. Although the Warren Court certainly played a part in this process, on the whole I would maintain that, despite its shortcomings, it played a part for the good. Nevertheless, not the smallest lesson to be learned from the Warren years is that the contradictions inherent in American society, particularly as these bear on the poor and the black, cannot be resolved by any single act of government—whether promulgated by the executive, the legislative, or, in this case, the judicial branch.

Endgames

SMILING THROUGH THE APOCALYPSE: ESQUIRE'S HISTORY OF THE SIXTIES. Edited by HAROLD HAYES. *McCall Publishing Co. 981 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by EDWARD GROSSMAN

BACK IN THE 50's a sub-editor at *Esquire*, Hugh Hefner, quit, inspired by the idea that what this country needed was a glossy magazine with pictures of the girl next door undressed. The product (nay, philosophy) that he was soon putting out was not to be convincingly imitated or denied, but it was gigantically there, it had to be taken into consideration somehow in a revised editorial impulse at the magazine which had briefly employed him and which he had found lacking. One of the things Hefner thought was wrong with *Esquire* was that it had stopped delivering on its traditional reputation of being a racy magazine, a reputation traceable to the 30's, when *Esquire*'s emblem was the sugar daddy with the monocle screwed into his eye socket. In the 60's *Esquire* did not attempt to regain this "image," which in any event dated from more modest times, when it was easier to make a girl blush or to get a rise out of a man. But the typography, the subject matter, and the approach of *Esquire* did get bright once again, and for the last few years the magazine, while not quite the bonanza *Playboy* has been, has enjoyed opulent advertising and a circulation close to one million. The very successful compromise it struck between the dreary business of coming out each month and the ambition to publish something of value was characterized by its being serious, and at the same time jolly. The editors knew that we were living in disturbed times. This presented both an obligation to deal with the disturbances in a serious way, and an opportunity to exploit them wittily, ironically, divertingly, for many of the problems on the scene were symptoms of the richest, most powerful country having gone marvelously off its tracks. Thus *Esquire*, among other things, was "with-it," right up-to-date, it chronicled our various vulgarities (baton-twirling colleges by Terry Southern, topless restaurants by Gina Berriault). Perhaps its distinguishing editorial attitude is epitomized in the title of the collection its editors have now brought out: *Smiling Through the Apocalypse*. There is the affirmation that things have gone bloodily awry, but that one still takes it humorously; beyond the affirmation, unsaid, is the suspicion that the disturbances of our times, while they have left none of us totally unscathed, have affected some much more than others, and among those affected least in terms of bodily injury and financial happiness have been the college-educated, mobile, city-dwelling upper-middle class, many of whom read *Esquire*.

Presumably it was simple for a magazine to be successful in the 60's—all that time and money on people's hands. Yet because conditions were so favorable, newsstands bloomed with publications, they were hung with them like ornaments on a Christmas tree, and the struggle was fierce to catch the customer's eye, then to nail down his allegiance. Who was to say *this* deserved one's attention (and dollar), and *this* didn't? There was no mercy shown the tired subjects, like the Kennedys and the Generation Gap. Nevertheless, the comment, much of it self-congratulatory, that this was a Golden Age of magazine writing, was not entirely without substance. There was innovation going on, and if it was not really true that a new art form came along to displace fiction, it was clear that under the pressure of competition no less than the apparent outstripping of fancy by our daily reality, some good, interesting, and unexpected kinds of writing were being done. The popular label for it was the "New Journalism," reportage of some length in which it was understood the writer kept himself in the foreground. The magazine which first published Norman Mailer's political journalism can take credit both for having pointed a new direction and for having published the best that has been accomplished in this genre so far.

For some reason, however, this is not what a casual, rather than devoted, reader remembers when he thinks about *Esquire*. He recalls a vivacious magazine of chronic ugliness and constant bad layout, with reviews up front snaking around men's clothing ads, unreadable, and articles continued in the back of the book, petering out among ads for cottage colonies in Barbados. One remembers *Esquire* as having, in the compromise it struck, published more than its share of ephemera, stuff to be glanced at in the dentist's office or when your shuttle was stacked up over LaGuardia. One's memory and imagination construct a mock issue in which are discovered a chapter of Mailer's Novel-by-Deadline; a "Red Hot Center" spread on some profession or racket; What to Wear; a laundry slip made out by F. Scott Fitzgerald; a picture of Richard Nixon captioned, "Why Is This Man Laughing?"; perhaps even a cheesecake of some slightly older, slightly intellectual starlet, sans nipples.

TO READ around in *Smiling Through the Apocalypse* is to learn that one's caricature is unfair. This thick book—*War-and-Peace*-length—begins with Mailer's

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EDWARD GROSSMAN *has contributed essays and reviews to* COMMENTARY *and other periodicals.*

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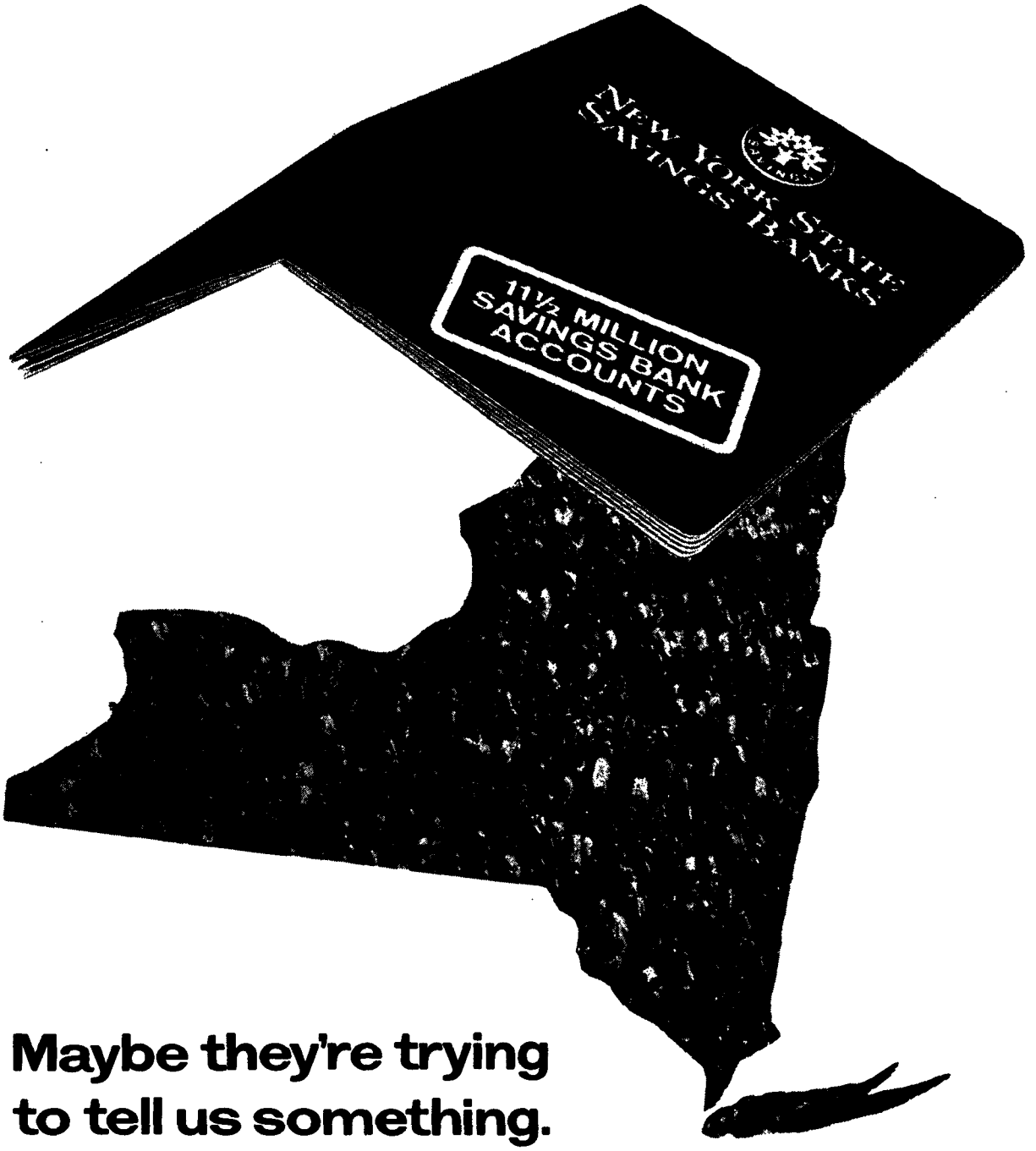

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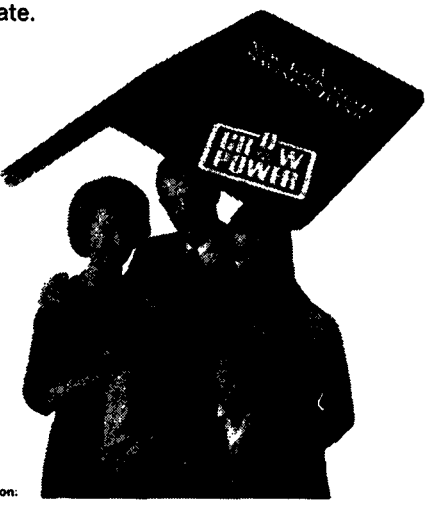

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evocation of the 1960 Democratic Convention and ends with the encounter of Gore Vidal and William Buckley in Chicago in 1968. The requisite bases are touched—politics, personalities, war, race, gossip—but the pleasantly surprising thing is that perhaps a good half of the writing is better than one might have allowed oneself to hope. The words outside the jazzy confines of the magazine are now and again impressive, as they were no doubt meant to be. For with such a collection, the editors of a magazine lay claim to something. They want to provide a sort of record of an era that is between historical and contemporary, but more important, they want to vindicate or exonerate themselves, as if to say, yes, we have published every month for ten years, the mind-boggling figure is 120 issues, yet we have at least this to show for it. And although decades are arbitrary delimitations of almost anything, it does seem to be true that the normal life span of an idea in journalism is ten years. *Smiling Through the Apocalypse* is therefore something in the way of evidence presented to the court by the accused.

Thanks to several pieces of work included, the verdict should probably be, on the whole, innocent. Mailer's "Superman Comes to the Supermarket" is a seminal piece, the best one in the book by far, something one feels reasonably certain will survive. His "Some Children of the Goddess" is more like self-parody, that trap that always lies close to strong, egotistical writers, but it too is shrewd in its appraisal of the various talents Mailer considered himself to be in competition with in the writing field, and if it was read by them and secretly taken to heart, it is not impossible that it had a decisive effect on what will one day be studied as Am. Lit. 1960-70. Concerning Vietnam, which will remain central to any history of our times, this collection has three pieces that convey with thoroughgoing success, each in a different way, the misery of that war—sarcastically in John Sack's "When Demirgian Comes Marching Home Again (Hurrah? Hurrah?)"; desperately in Michael Herr's "Hell Sucks"; and with poker-faced horror in Normand Poirier's "An American Atrocity." On a subject of passing interest (Errol Flynn), there is William Styron's minor classic, "Mrs. Aadland's Little Girl, Beverly."

Mailer, Styron, Baldwin, and others happened to have published in *Esquire*, but a number of the good things in this book are by writers *Esquire* can call its own. Garry Wills, who is underrated, has a nice touch in reports on Jack Ruby, the funeral of Martin Luther King, and the Black Nation in Detroit. Gay Talese contributes several examples of his specialty, the long, very long, "profile," meticulous and unsparing; perhaps the best of these is "Frank Sinatra Has a Cold." The most dazzling member of the *Esquire* team, however, is Tom Wolfe. A paragon of the "New Journalism," in danger, one would have thought, of becoming merely quaint, his early work nevertheless is still about as easy to ignore as one of those animated neon signs out in the middle of the desert. One remembers him as sometimes irritating, with his crazy typing, but here—and especially in "Las Vegas (What?). Las Vegas (Can't Hear You! Too Noisy). *Las Vegas*!!!!"—he is both highly entertaining and moderately instructive. What he did was to invent an exclamatory sociology to deal with certain grotesque malaises (like stock-car racing) that spread across America in recent years. His intention is finally didactic, but that is all right, and even when he comes closest to straight teaching his enthusiasm saves him:

> One can see the magnitude of the achievement. Las Vegas takes what in other American towns is but a quixotic inflammation of the senses for some poor salary mule in the brief interval between the flagstone rambler and the automatic elevator downtown and magnifies it, foliates it, embellishes it into an institution.

Wolfe's gift is his ability to love the obviously unlovable. James Baldwin's was to arrest the sloppy reader in us and fix our attention on a cool, clear, honest prose that cut—a simple thing to prescribe and infinitely hard to come by. Two essays here, "Fifth Avenue, Uptown," and "The Black Boy Looks at the White Boy," written in 1960 and 1961, are among the best that have been written in America. But it is typical of *Esquire* that it not only published these, but also, in 1968, an interview with Baldwin which is reprinted in this collection. The interview is a bad performance, glib and shrill simultaneously. It was given in the aftermath of King's assassination; that can excuse it but it cannot make it less disappointing. As for *Esquire*, it reveals a nose for journalistic expediency: after a terrible killing, get someone famous who is associated with the general problem to talk. Doesn't really matter what he says. Here is the kind of a flaw in judgment, if not in business sense, that leads inevitably to assigning Jean Genet and William Burroughs to "cover" the Democratic Convention: the idea is gimmicky, the result predictable, as can be verified in *Smiling Through the Apocalypse*.

In short, while this collection is by no means the quintessence of *Esquire*, being much better than an average monthly issue, its failures are recognizably those of the magazine. Nowhere is this more evident than in the final selection, the Buckley vs. Vidal *chien-lit*, an interminable display of mutual petty bitchiness, aggravated with footnotes. But maybe it is all a low enough price to pay for those other pieces of work which are valuable. And maybe, at any rate, it is all a sign of the times.

Tradition & the New

JEWISH PHILOSOPHY IN MODERN TIMES: FROM MENDELSSOHN TO ROSENZWEIG. By NATHAN ROTENSTREICH. *Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 282 pp. $6.50.*

Reviewed by MARVIN FOX

ATTEMPTS to define the essence of Judaism have been made recurrently by Jewish thinkers over the centuries. An early instance is

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the well-known talmudic discussion which begins by identifying "basic" Judaism with the 613 commandments enjoined in the Torah, and then progressively reduces these to eleven, six, three, two, and finally one principle, the statement of Habakkuk: "But the righteous shall live by his faith." Later, as systematic Jewish philosophies emerged, views about the essence of Judaism were summed up in various creedal formulas and elaborated in weighty treatises. The process continues nowadays in the diverse contemporary efforts at Jewish self-definition (including the most recent debates in Israel over "who is a Jew").

The modern period, stretching roughly from the late 18th century to the first third of the 20th century, has been particularly rich in Jewish philosophical quest. For the greater part of the period Jewish philosophers in Central and Western Europe stood under the all-pervasive influence of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel, and fashioned their interpretations of Judaism accordingly, either in terms of a synthesis with the prevailing conceptions of philosophical idealism or, conversely, in terms of a negative reaction to those ideas. In either case, most Jewish religious thinkers of the time found it necessary to confront the larger intellectual environment and to make some accommodation to it. In this illuminating survey, Professor Nathan Rotenstreich describes how the particular encounter, "in a world . . . composed of ingredients whose nature is not exclusively religious," served to determine the philosophies of eleven major modern figures: Moses Mendelssohn, S. D. Luzzatto, Moritz Lazarus, Hermann Cohen, S. N. Formstecher, Samuel Hirsch, Nachman Krochmal, Salomon Ludwig Steinheim, Franz Rosenzweig, Rav Kook, and A. D. Gordon.

For Mendelssohn, Luzatto, Lazarus, and Cohen, the essence of Judaism lay in its ethics. In part, these thinkers were moved by the Kantian denial that metaphysics is possible, which left only ethics as the proper object of rational reflection. But even when they admitted the possibility of metaphysics, they could not conceive it as the exclu-

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sive property of any particular religion. Hence, what remained for Judaism and rendered it distinctive was its specific ethical code. There is more to the story, however, since, for Mendelssohn, ethics, as well as metaphysics, partakes of the universal, so that in his ultimate view the essence of Judaism was confined to the divine commandments which he believed permanently bind and obligate every Jew. Lazarus was even more reductive: in good Kantian fashion, he held ethics to be completely autonomous; thus, religion in his view is legitimate only insofar as it provides the best context for ethical conduct.

THESE philosophies, as must be apparent, constituted a severe attenuation of traditional, or classical, Judaism, depriving the Jewish religion both of its metaphysical roots and of the possibility of traditional forms of personal piety. If they achieved a seemingly successful synthesis between Judaism and idealism, they did so only at the price of casting off much that had been—and still is—essential to the Jewish faith. As Rotenstreich comments:

> By subsuming religion under law and ethics Mendelssohn reduced Judaism to dimensions that satisfy the moral mind but not the religious temper. If Judaism defines only what is right and wrong in action but not what is true or false in belief, and if the laws of the Torah are not indispensable to salvation, why should Jews continue to abide by them? People do not revere what they can dispense with, and moral enthusiasm alone is poor fare for the afflicted and those who seek God's pardon.

Hermann Cohen, the exponent of Judaism as "the religion of reason," and a philosopher whose Jewish beliefs adhered more closely to the tradition than those of his predecessors, receives a more sympathetic appraisal. Cohen, too, initially subscribed to a conception of Judaism as being primarily a system of ethics, but over the years he moved closer to a position that might be described as theological-metaphysical, while retaining the centrality of the ethical component. For him, the essence of Judaism was grounded in the doctrine of repentance, that is, in the Jewish insistence, in contrast to Christianity, that each man has the power to transform and redeem himself without divine grace. (Cohen's God of religion acts above all as a cosmic guarantee that man's moral striving will be effective.) Though Cohen held true religion to be rational, and thus necessarily universal, he assigned a special place to Judaism as the original and purest version of "the religion of reason." In Rotenstreich's words, he held that "the religion of Israel is not identical with the religion of reason, but is its principal manifestation in the history of religious consciousness."

ANOTHER GROUP OF Jewish thinkers considered by Rotenstreich were men who gave primacy to the ontological aspects of their versions of Judaism and who therefore seem even less authentically Jewish than those who viewed Judaism as primarily or exclusively concerned with ethics. Formstecher, Hirsch, and Krochmal, each in his own way, created a supposedly Jewish version of Hegel's or Schelling's idealism. Accepting the distinction between nature and spirit as fundamental, they considered Judaism an excellent version of the religion of the spirit, while identifying paganism with the religion of nature. In their devotion to Hegel and Schelling they managed to ignore the fact that this sharp distinction between nature and spirit is alien to classical Judaism; and in their confrontation with the philosophies of their time, they invented a new Judaism whose tenets were rooted in German idealism rather than in the Torah.

It is particularly ironic that Krochmal, the philosopher of this group with the deepest Jewish learning, should also have been the most extreme in his radical rejection of traditional Jewish ideas. His God is pantheistic, and his Judaism is only absolute idealism under another name. For Krochmal, Judaism has value not in and for itself, but only insofar as it can be stripped of its particular traditional elements and reinterpreted as identical with the "absolute spir-

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itual." Those scholars who interpret Maimonides (incorrectly, in my opinion) as having reduced Judaism to Aristotelian metaphysics find it singularly appropriate that Krochmal, in reducing Judaism to the dominant philosophy of his day, entitled his book *A Guide to the Perplexed of This Time.*

IN Steinheim and Rosenzweig, Professor Rotenstreich sees two important figures who took what he calls "the road back." Though they differed from each other in many significant respects, they were at one "in their common distaste for idealism" and "in their effort to restore to faith its non-rational basis." They both also laid great stress on the uniqueness of Judaism and resisted the introduction of foreign elements into the structure of Jewish faith. As Rotenstreich notes, Steinheim rejected Mendelssohn's Judaism as a conception "that leaves Judaism nothing but a wig and a beard . . . which were quickly transformed under the impact of secular Judaism into curls and braids in the latest style."

For Steinheim, revelation, not reason, is the core of Judaism. This revelation is vouchsafed to man by a transcendent God, and confers instruction available through no other source. Reason by itself is inadequate, receiving its proper completion only through divine revelation. Steinheim tried to refute the standard claims of philosophical rationalism by showing them to be self-defeating or destructive of that which is essential to humanity: there is no true humanity, he held, without ethics, and no ethics without human freedom; since a fixed, all-encompassing rational order makes no provision for human freedom, it likewise renders morality impossible. Steinheim countered total rationalism by adopting what he took to be the traditional Jewish alternative. Whereas the rationalist position must deny creation and affirm that matter is eternal, since it is a principle of reason that *ex nihilo nihil fit,* Steinheim held that God did indeed create the world out of nothing. The fact of divine creation sunders the supposed rational order of the universe, allowing for opportunities of freedom

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and morality. Steinheim believed that if man would only reflect on the limits of his reason, he would surely come to recognize the necessity and truth of divine revelation.

Rosenzweig approached Judaism from an existentialist posture, according to which faith is based on the immediacy of personal experience; he considered "the given fact of religious experience as an ultimate fact from which there is no recourse." Rotenstreich considers him, however, to have failed to effect a union between his Judaism and his philosophy: "We might say that when Rosenzweig speaks as an existentialist philosopher he does not speak as a Jew, and when he speaks as a Jew he does not speak as an existentialist philosopher." I think that Rosenzweig would have pleaded guilty to the charge, but he would also have denied its main point, that a living Judaism—as Professor Rotenstreich maintains—must always live symbiotically with the philosophical trends of its age. Rosenzweig, despite his mastery of the literature and thought of Western culture, seemed not to think so. He spoke as a Jew and affirmed his own Jewishness not as a result of a set of philosophical arguments, but rather from the depth of his Jewish self-consciousness, from a recognition of himself as formed by, and living in the context of, a personal and historical Jewish reality. He was not moved by any inner need to come to terms with a set of external philosophical claims. Perhaps that is why Rosenzweig's Jewish writings, despite their occasional idiosyncrasies, have a more authentic Jewish ring then do those of any of the earlier thinkers dealt with here.

Among the last figures whom Rotenstreich treats is Rav Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Palestine during the Mandate years. He is the most thoroughly Jewish personality in this book, and the one least involved in or affected by general intellectual currents. Unlike the others, he was raised in the total piety of a learned home in the *shtetl* and was educated in great *yeshivot*; he devoted his life to rabbinic service, and had intellectual concerns which were very different from those of his fellow Jewish savants. For him the truth of Torah was axiomatic, and he viewed all reality from that perspective. Rav Kook's prime concern, both in theory and in practice, was to restore the broken unity of all existence. In his life, as in his teaching, he sought to bridge the barriers that separate Jew from Jew, man from man, the sacred from the profane. He conceived the world as one harmonious whole. His deepest conviction was that cosmic harmony could be grasped by any man who penetrated the secrets of the Torah and who allowed his life to be formed and structured by the deepest principles of true Jewish faith.

In charting the philosophical road from Moses Mendelssohn to Rav Kook, Professor Rotenstreich proves a learned and perceptive guide. And though he offers no answers of his own to the problem of Judaism in our days—he does, however, leave us with clear understanding that we cannot simply adopt for ourselves the solutions of our predecessors—his concluding thought is well worth pondering:

> Has a revealed, preordained Judaism any meaning for a generation at a time when it is caught up in the stream of events and swept along on its strong current? On the other hand, is there any meaning to a historical continuity that is devoid of Jewish content, however it may be interpreted? It is no longer a question as to which interpretation of Judaism enlists sympathy and allegiance; the validity of the very concept of interpretation has been rendered doubtful. These questions admit of no theoretical solutions prior to those claimed by the exigencies of existence itself.

Sequels

THE ESTATE. By ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 374 pp. $6.95.*

THE PROMISE. By CHAIM POTOK. *Knopf. 359 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by DOROTHY RABINOWITZ

SOMEONE SHOULD say a cautionary word about sequels. To that end, Isaac Bashevis Singer has spoken eloquently, if indirectly. *The Estate* stands a three-hundred-seventy-four page caution against epic windups of epochs, against the compulsion to sustain dramatic lives the length of a second novel, only in order to put a period to them. Yet the passion to put a period to the lives one has created is fit and, undertaken with better consequence than Singer shows in *The Estate*, redeeming, for the possibility certainly exists that we will be told more than we already know about the essential nature of the characters, about the epoch in which they live, and, in Singer's case, interminably die.

The Estate, however, not only fails to tell very much more, but succeeds in reducing the finely-wrought lives established in its masterful forerunner, *The Manor*. Characters once distinctive are blurred and barely distinguishable from one another in the waters of social drama which overwhelm them. That occurs not because, as one might guess, Singer has explicitly undertaken to render an epoch in which, as he says in the Preface, "all the spiritual and intellectual ideas that triumphed in the modern era had their roots . . . ," but because he has apparently decided to rush in on that intention. Thus, the texture of *The Estate* is flattened by the continuance of once brilliantly rendered characters, now predictable dramatic pawns to a chronicle of enlightenment ideas, upheaval and dispersal. At the same time, Singer insists on seeing through to the end a melodramatic narrative line for each character.

The Manor, by contrast, is a masterpiece of a novel. From it, characters emerge with all the distinction that a lingering, many-toned, scrupulous novelistic energy can give. Calman Jacoby and his heirs, their youth, their betrothals, their mergers, the very business of their life in the Poland of 1863 (the period immediately after the unsuccessful rebellion against the Czar); the Jampolskis, Polish nobles and defeated insurrectionists whose lives and estate merge fatefully with that of the Jacobys—all are rendered with the precision, the strategy, the *patience* of a supreme novelist.

DOROTHY RABINOWITZ *reviewed two books by I. J. Singer in our February issue.*

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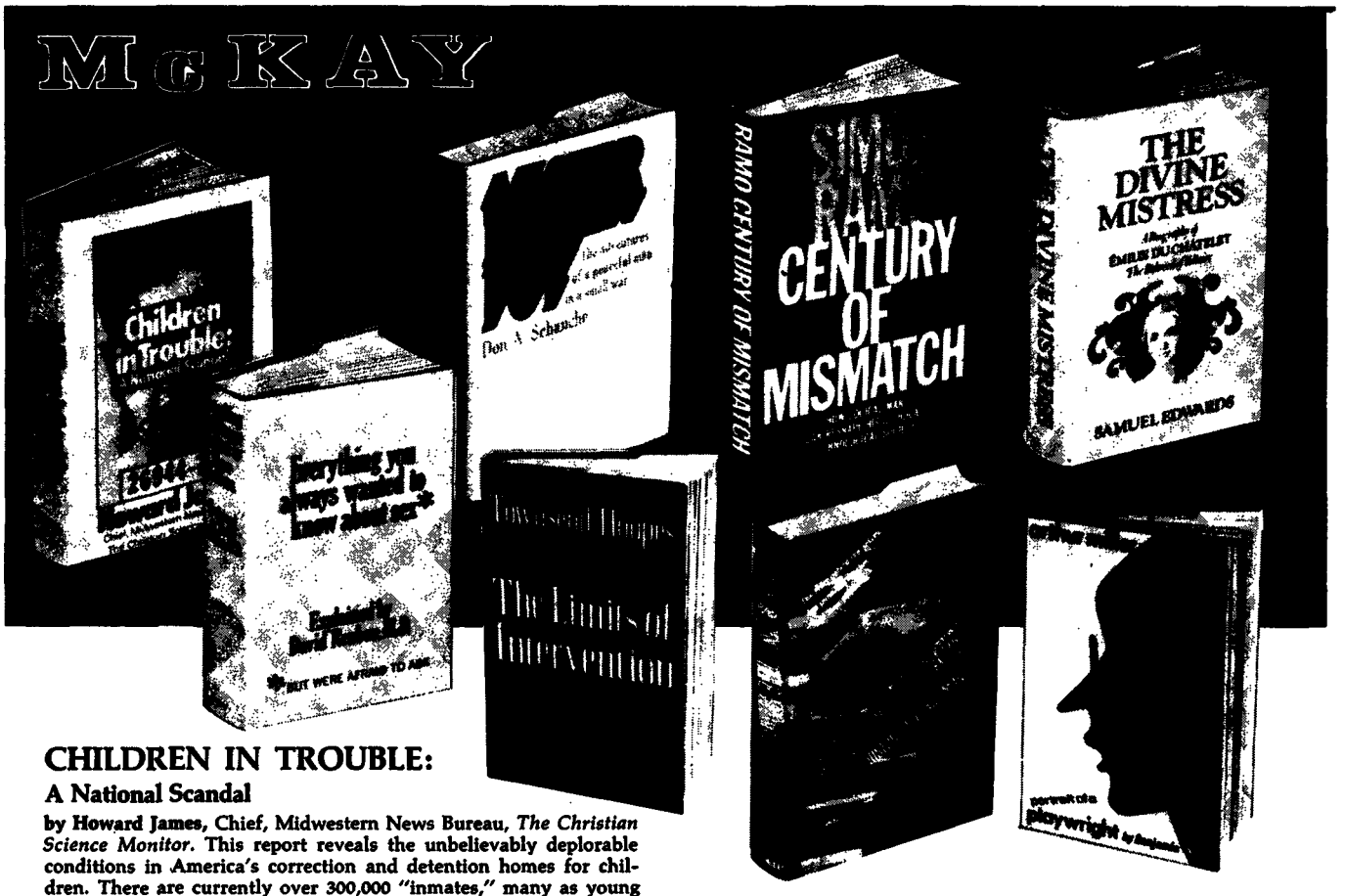

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ARTHUR MILLER: Portrait of a Playwright

by Benjamin Nelson, author of *Tennessee Williams: The Man and His Work.* Mr. Nelson dissects and analyzes each of Miller's major plays as well as the novel *Focus,* and the screenplay *The Misfits.* This is essentially an appraisal, but Miller's life, to the extent necessary to illuminate his work, comes under scrutiny as well. **$5.95**

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Singer, to be sure, had ample room for patience. Both *The Manor* and *The Estate* were published first in serial form in the *Jewish Daily Forward,* which accounts for a good many problems. Perhaps *The Manor,* undertaken and sustained with such high heart, tells simply that introductions are better than resolutions for some writers: for Isaac Bashevis Singer. Perhaps *The Estate* can tell us no more than we already know about the essential nature of the characters because for episodic writing characters are constrained to a certain logic, from which their adventures follow, and because in the writing of serialized literature everything, after a while, must become episodic. Characters do not grow for the reader, in the sense in which we take growth to mean surprise and wonder for the hidden possibilities of men. For the work of this saga, characters once cast do not change. They learn, but that is a very different matter.

They learn like Ezriel, man of science and enlightenment in *The Manor,* turned home again to belief in *The Estate.* Toward the end of the latter novel, Ezriel visits the Rabbi of Marshinov (all of whose scenes are most movingly rendered):

> "Rabbi, I can't stand it anymore!" Ezriel cried out, his voice breaking. Taking out his handkerchief, the Rabbi dabbed at his eyes.
>
> "Did you see the truth?" he asked.
>
> "Not completely. But I saw their lie," Ezriel replied.
>
> "It's all the same."

The same Reb Jochanan of Marshinov grows to the divinity of his calling in a touchingly sustained ascent. For the rest, Clara remains (for half of *The Manor* and the length of *The Estate*) an adventuress and a luckless one. Calman, once head of the manor and central to its life, a zestful Jew and patriarch, is shrunk to a hermit piety by his heirs (half of whom are mad or apostates, or married to apostates), and by his own misbegotten marriage to Clara. On all the characters established in *The Manor,* the episodic fates on which serial literature depend anchor themselves, submerging the features and texture of a fine cast. Only resolutions remain, and a few good scenes.

A novel teeming with resolutions, in the absence of any other momentum, is by definition flawed, and that is certainly true of *The Estate.* A confusion of lives race to their ends, and the nature of the race has been obvious from the beginning. Deaths are peculiarly exacting in this last thrust of Singer's epic. All characters who die do so at length, intensely. "The very manner of their death is exhilarating," as one reviewer has praised too precisely. Singer's characters die on principle, at length, exhilaratingly, as if to attest to the robustness of the life portrayed, a clue to high intention and to a fatigued novelistic spirit. And how could it be otherwise? The achievement of *The Manor* could not but wind down, in an adventure of resolutions.

But the critical response to *The Estate* attests to Singer's interesting status. *The Estate* has been received in most literary quarters, including that of the reviewer quoted above, as another work of virtuosity just like *The Manor,* only more so—a piece of critical presumption that dazzles with its disservice to *The Manor* and dismays with its knee-jerk celebration. Into the life of every master writer falls an interesting but heavily flawed work. Let this one be Singer's. The author of *The Manor, Satan in Goray, The Family Moskat*—to name a few—will survive a lesser work better than he will a critical milieu which refuses out of cultural piety to distinguish between a lesser and a greater work.

ANOTHER KIND of piety—of the warm sociological variety—must account for the status of Chaim Potok, whose sequel work, *The Promise,* is no disappointment as its forerunner, *The Chosen,* is no masterpiece. *The Chosen* stayed at the top of the best-seller list for reasons which are easy enough to imagine. The story of Danny and Reuven and the Brooklyn Hasidic world begins, in *The Chosen,* with a now-famous baseball game in which Reuven's eye is fairly torn out of his head by Danny, batting fiercely for the Yeshiva team out to beat the *apikorsim.* Indeed, the first sixty pages of that novel gave fair promise of an interesting storyteller at work. Very soon thereafter in *The Chosen,* one sees that nothing of that promise will be sustained. After a first fine start, Mr. Potok declines into tract-like psychology with, I suppose, endearing spiritual qualities.

Mr. Potok's problem in *The Promise,* which is exactly worthy of its predecessor, is not with his subject matter. Indeed, the world he apostrophizes in both novels is a rich one. *The Promise* continues with Reuven—his father's son—struggling to stand somewhere between zealots and mere lovers of the Torah, and with Danny, Hasid turned psychologist, doing graduate work at Columbia. Mr. Potok's problem is not lack of a story. He is a yarn spinner, and he knows what a plot is. Mr. Potok's problem is his sensibility—a fatal deficiency, considering his craft. In Mr. Potok's case, the sensibility which is father to language is Jewish-American genteel, and academic to the bone. A standard Potok rendering flows effortless:

> Danny went into a lengthy psychological analysis of Willy Loman's delusions and talked about how crucial it was to be able to distinguish between reality and fantasy.

Danny and Reuven talk. This is a novel of many conversations. Typically:

> "Yes," he said, "I can understand violence if a person makes a rational decision that his world is utterly evil. . . ."
>
> "Not many people can make a decision like that rationally."
>
> "They ought to read some good books."
>
> "Marx read a lot of good books."
>
> "Marx was full of rage. Books don't do much good when you're that full of rage."
>
> "We're all full of rage. That's something I've begun to think about these days. Who isn't full of rage?"
>
> "Yes. But most people manage one way or another to handle it."
>
> "Why are people so full of rage? How would your friend Freud answer that?"

Such dialogue, sustained as it is

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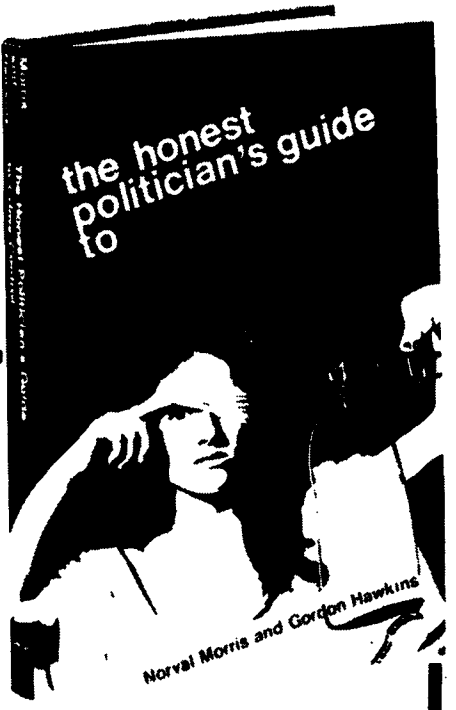

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with Mr. Potok throughout—for that is the language the sensibility *naturally* assumes—can only be anti-affect in its proprieties. Perhaps Mr. Potok is one of those novelists who will profit by translation into another language. Many are the moving scenes Mr. Potok is about to have, many he conceives. All are muffled in speeches. In addition, a special form of genteel educational psychologizing intrudes, along with a heavily explicit rendering of every thought of every character who has one. (Danny tugs at nonexistent sidelocks all through, in an endless motif of allegiance.) It ought to be noted for fans of Mr. Potok and fans of parallelism in general, that there is a spirited volleyball game in the sequel.

Secular Humanism

THE ENLIGHTENMENT: AN INTERPRETATION, VOLUME II, THE SCIENCE OF FREEDOM. By PETER GAY. *Knopf. 768 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by JOHN WEIGHTMAN

PROFESSOR GAY has concluded his twenty-year study of the Enlightenment with this second substantial volume, which is as admirably encyclopedic as the first. The completed work is probably the most comprehensive account of 18th-century intellectual attitudes that has so far appeared, since Professor Gay is not hemmed in by national frontiers but takes all Western Europe and America as his province. There are not many 18th-century specialists who are as familiar with Hume as they are with Montesquieu, or who can make an authoritative comparison between Lessing and Diderot. As a cosmopolitan study, Professor Gay's book is extremely valuable; it will be enjoyed by the general public, and university teachers will keep it by them to check their views and to argue with it, as they try to extend their knowledge over the vast field it encompasses.

This second volume is more particularly concerned with the positive ways in which the *philosophes* influenced thought and initiated change. They were buoyed up by the feeling that knowledge was increasing at an enormous pace and that its effects, by and large, could only be for the good. Many different factors contributed to this upsurge of reflection (they were examined in Volume I), but it is perhaps fair to say that the major revelation had been provided by Newton who, in one great intellectual effort, had reduced the movements of the universe to a pattern. What that great man had done for astronomy, lesser men could emulate in all other fields by bringing their intellects to bear on history, psychology, social organization, economics, education, and aesthetics. No other period in Western history displayed such confidence in the power of the mind. Professor Gay speaks of a "recovery of nerve" after a long period of quarrelsome adherence to dogma.

One of the constant pleasures to be derived from reading the *philosophes* comes from the feeling of reaching back to a sunny, human world before the murkiness of the 19th century and the anguish of the 20th. Perhaps we have now "lost our nerve" again and need a new injection of courage from the 18th century. In his final peroration, Professor Gay calls upon us to heed its example:

> We have known horrors, and may know horrors, that the men of the Enlightenment did not see in their nightmares. Yet, though few are inclined to believe it, none of this impairs the permanent value of the Enlightenment's humane and libertarian vision, or the permanent value of its critical method, any more than the *philosophes'* failure to live up to their own prescriptions or realize their own ideals compromises the worth of those prescriptions and those ideals compromises the worth of as it was in the eighteenth century: the world needs more light than it has, not less; the cure for the shortcomings of enlightened thought lies not in obscurantism but in further enlightenment. Our recognition of human irrationality, self-centeredness, stupidity beyond the *philosophes'* most pessimistic appraisals demands not surrender to such forces, but battle against them.

All this is unexceptionable, and Professor Gay's evaluation of the qualities and defects of the *philosophes* is clear and judicious. His interpretation is in no way controversial, except that he himself is openly on the side of the nonreligious view of the universe, as of course most partisans of the Enlightenment have been. It is perhaps even a little disappointing that, after such an exhaustive investigation both of the original works and of the vast library of comment listed in the Bibliographical Essay, he should have no new angle of vision to propose. One can quarrel, no doubt, with some of the terms he uses. In reviewing the first volume, *The Rise of Modern Paganism*, I queried the appropriateness of the word "pagan" when applied to 18th-century thought, which is essentially a secularized (or at most vaguely deistic) humanism, very different from the polytheistic paganism of antiquity.

IN THIS second volume, Professor Gay continues to use "pagan" in spite of its unsuitable overtones, and he has another general subtitle, "The Science of Freedom," which perpetuates the current confusion between "science" in the sense of moral or psychological speculation and "science" in the sense of empirically-verified knowledge. He refers incidentally to Freud as a great scientist; it would surely be truer to say that Freud was a great would-be scientist in a field not yet amenable to strict scientific treatment. The "social sciences" or the "human sciences," as the French call them, are a major consequence of Enlightenment thought, but their 18th-century innovators did not think of themselves as being "scientists" or "scientific" in the 19th- and 20th-century sense. In the 20th century, particularly among the French heirs of the Enlightenment, many arguments are still constantly bedeviled by the fact that the participants claim to be scientific, although they are manifestly speculative system-builders. In other words, there is a regrettable scientific superstition among non-scientists who think they are free of all superstitions.

Since Professor Gay has chosen to

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summarize the findings of the Enlightenment under a series of overt headings, such as history, sociology, toleration, economics, aesthetics, etc., he does not have anything specifically original to say about those deeper problems which underlie the conventional division into subjects; I am thinking of the ambiguities of "nature," the function of myth in civilized society, and the uncertainties of the relationships between intellectual attitudes and aesthetic expression. He gives an excellent account of what the *philosophes* themselves said but seems to be less interested in those aspects of the 18th century which can still appear puzzling to us today, and which are related to the discrepancies between intellectual attitudes and actual living. But perhaps I am just saying that he has written this book and not a different one; this one is, in itself, a sufficiently impressive achievement.

Mr. Secretary

PRESENT AT THE CREATION: MY YEARS IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT. By DEAN ACHESON. *Norton. 798 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by MARCUS CUNLIFFE

DEAN ACHESON'S career, viewed as such things are viewed, has been distinguished, and attended by high compliments and consolations—honorary degrees from Harvard and Yale, a steady rise through the Washington bureaucracy to the Secretaryship of State, the knowledge of having been a chief architect of an entirely new era of American foreign policy. But it has carried painful ironies. Fifteen to twenty years ago he was under attack as a betrayer of China to the Reds, a buddy of Alger Hiss, an internationalist, a "Com-symp." In recent years he and his policies are again under attack, this time from another flank. "Commissar of the Cold War" runs the heading of a long indictment of his memoirs by Ronald Steel (*New York Review of Books*, February 12, 1970)—a maladroit description, since the point of

MARCUS CUNLIFFE *is professor of American Studies at the University of Sussex.*

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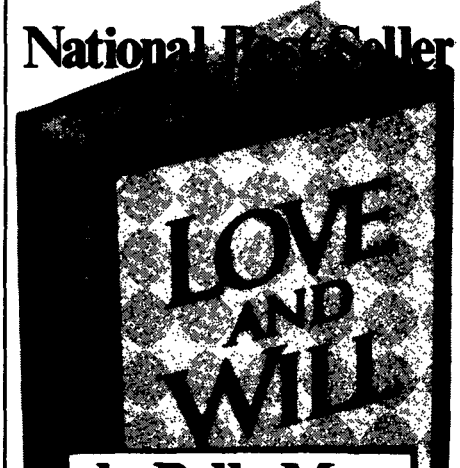

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the article is that the cold war originated in the District of Columbia rather than in the land of the commissars, but possibly a free-association memory of Acheson's old pink reputation. The brickbats have been as numerous as the bouquets.

To some extent Acheson seems to have brought them on himself, through a fault of temperament. The patrician mode, nurtured at Groton and Yale, alienated men less seethingly resentful than Joe McCarthy. His prose style, on the whole clear and dignified, nevertheless prompts the feeling that he draped his mind in the best authors as he draped his limbs at the best tailors. Consider the title of his book. It comes from a remark attributed to Alphonso the Learned, a 13th-century Spanish king: "Had I been present at the creation I would have given some useful hints for the better ordering of the universe." This is equivocal. Was Alphonso joking—twinkling, in an Oliver Wendell Holmes-ish way? Presumably not; he sounds like those medieval aristocrats who, claiming direct descent from the Holy Family, addressed the Virgin Mary in their prayers as "*tu*." If Alphonso was not joking, then the joke is on him. The humor derives from the absurd arrogance of persons of exalted rank. But was *Acheson* twinkling; did he intend the epigraph to mock at vainglory? Perhaps, and yet he says, "the postwar years were a period of creation, for the ordering of which I shared with others some responsibility." The joke, if any, has turned solemn, as if Acheson the Learned saw himself as having been present at the making of a new cosmic treaty, and as if God had initialed his policy recommendations. A similar loftiness may be read into his disdainful comments on such institutions as the UN or Congress—hazards, apparently, to diplomatic navigation; or into the low grades he allots to a variety of figures—FDR for being a backslapper, Bernard Baruch for shallow conceit, Walter Lippmann for being an "ambivalent Jeremiah of the press."

BUT THIS line should not be pushed too far. Dean Acheson, after all, had many friends and admirers; disdain, apart from being a form of courage (as we see in Acheson's support of Hiss), may also, when used deliberately, be a valuable technique; and Acheson was a resourceful tactician and persuader. The fault, so far as it was Acheson's, seems far more to have been a fault of policy. Previous criticisms of the foreign policy of the Truman administration were low-caliber affairs, denunciations lacking chapter and verse. The new criticisms of American overseas activities since 1945 are another matter. These authors—Ronald Steel, Gar Alperovitz, Richard J. Barnet, David Horowitz, and others—have pored over the testimony and weighed the outcome. Their dominant mode might be described as footnoted anger; and their anger is fed by urbane memoirs whose authors seem unready to repent past errors. As Steel's review shows, Acheson's chapters furnish plenty of ammunition. Here he is, assuming with every sign of satisfaction that America by her exertions saved Europe from collapse and the whole world from Communism. Today's critics pounce upon passages like the following, in which Acheson explains the genesis of the Truman Doctrine of 1947, at the moment when the British suddenly announced that they could no longer spare troops to hold down the left-wing upheaval in Greece:

> When we convened the next morning in the White House to open the subject with our Congressional masters, I knew we were met at Armageddon. These Congressmen had no conception of what challenged them; it was my task to bring it home. No time was left for measured appraisal. In the past 18 months, I said, Soviet pressure on the Straits, on Iran, and on northern Greece had brought the Balkans to the point where a highly possible Soviet breakthrough might open three continents to Soviet penetration. Like apples in a barrel infected by one rotten one, the corruption of Greece would infect Iran and all to the east. It would also carry infection to Africa through Asia Minor and Egypt, and to Europe. . . . The Soviet Union was playing one of the greatest gambles in history at minimal cost. We and we alone are in a position to break up the play.

To revisionist commentators this is a typical instance of Achesonian oversimplification. They imply that when he was not being ingenuous he was being disingenuous. Ignorance, a desire to manipulate Congress, doctrinaire anti-Communism? Whatever the explanation, the critics of the Truman-Marshall-Acheson formulas note that the Secretary of State never sought to differentiate popular discontent from Communist conspiracy. Whether in Greece or in China, he seemed incapable of understanding that Communism was not monolithic. To him Soviet maneuvers were ubiquitous, greedy, and depraved. Armored in American righteousness, he could not see that Russia had any legitimate cause for alarm—for example, over the possible resurgence of Germany, or the American possession (and use) of atomic weapons. So each Russian reaction to each American move was perceived as an additional proof of Communist hostility. Ac-

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cording to this view, Acheson was himself a Red-baiter: his was only a respectable version of better-Red-than-dead McCarthyism, and so it served him right when the biter was bit.

This is of course the dominant current interpretation, not the final word. *Present at the Creation* will, however, do little to alter it. In his book Acheson hardly seems aware of such charges, and by way of answer more or less contents himself with an oracular quotation from the historian C. V. Wedgwood: "History is lived forwards but it is written in retrospect. We know the end before we consider the beginning and we can never wholly recapture what it was to know the beginning only." True, maybe, but we have to do our best. Several of Dean Acheson's associates have in the interim had second thoughts, and are prepared to concede that here and there the American policy-makers made bad mistakes. Historians, too, have revised their opinions, and reasonably so: compare Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s *The Crisis of Confidence* (1969) with his *The Vital Center* (1949)—written at a time when Schlesinger, in his own subsequent words, had been a "crusading anti-Communist." Not Acheson: whether through stubbornness, or through loyalty to President Truman and General Marshall (whom he deeply admires), or because he has not done his homework, he tells his tale much as he might have done fifteen years ago. In 1970, though, the brisk gentlemanly tone, the apposite anecdotes and understated, decanal or professorial sarcasms are oddly anachronistic. *Present at the Creation* gives the air of having been written for the record, tardily, rather than out of any fierce inner impulse to reach the truth, or even to fight back against today's inquisitors.

This is a pity, for Acheson's sake and for history's sake. One can see how a proud man might decide that it was wisest not to respond to polemic, despite the fact that his own intelligence, information, and integrity were being impugned. He might with some justification believe that the revisionist process tends to diminish everyone involved, the accusers as well as those accused. The revisers over-revise, ignoring or concealing some evidence in the very act of emphasizing *other* evidence. The truths they proclaim are relative, relative to the moment and colored by its concerns. Today's "radicals" are in this sense as modishly (if unwittingly) conformist as yesterday's celebrators of American "consensus." In each case the historians move in a cozy ambience of mutual corroboration, echoing and applauding their fellows.

But such reflections, if they occur to Mr. Acheson, are not heartening. At best they are *tu quoque* propositions: *you're no better than we were*. And if that is so, it reduces one's own statements to the same temporary, provisional status—indeed makes them less "relevant" because less contemporary. The really unfortunate thing about Dean Acheson's seven-hundred-page reticence is that there *is* a case to make, and that if not made it goes by default.

The case will not make him a hero, in the eyes of 1970. It may consist largely of mitigating pleas; yet at the moment they are not being given the attention they deserve. Latter-day revisionists portray their country as having fallen upon the world, at the behest of anti-Communist ideologues, like a beast of prey. We ought to remember that when poor Harry Truman found himself President in 1945 he employed the metaphor in a quite different way. He felt, he said, as if the world had fallen on him. And so it had. The American policy-makers of the cold-war era were above all bewildered men. The nations, empires, alignments, economies of the world were in chaos. Suddenly the United States had the main responsibility for organizing and financing reconstruction; and yet the rivalries of Communist-capitalist ideology meant that American policies would be automatically resented and resisted in some parts of the world. For a task of such urgent immensity and complexity the United States was woefully ill-equipped. Two sets of general principles, isolationism and internationalism, coexisted in the nation's mind. But they contradicted one another and each was itself

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ambivalent. Isolationism mingled the virtue of modesty with the vice of xenophobic meanness; internationalism combined the virtue of Wilsonian idealism with the vice of cocksure hyperactivity.

Dean Acheson was, of course, not entirely unprepared for his postwar tasks. He was an old Washington hand, who had practiced law there and had briefly worked for Roosevelt in the Treasury Department, before seriously entering government service as Assistant Secretary of State in 1941. *Present at the Creation* moves quickly over this ground. But it is clear that Acheson's generation was deeply influenced by the lessons of the long, hard, and yet unpremeditated and confused struggle with the Axis powers. The worst enemy, it seemed, was timidity; in foreign affairs its synonym was "appeasement," and to invoke this dread word after 1945 was to conjure up the humiliating terrors of the Blitzkrieg and Pearl Harbor. Almost as bad was mere busywork: fussing away at daily routines without actually making policy, or squabbling for petty advantage in bureaucratic skirmishes. Decisiveness seemed so rare and so valuable that it was easy to slip by imperceptible degrees into regarding *decision-making* as the "fundamental" aspect. Decisiveness was perhaps the quality that Acheson admired above all others in Truman and Marshall. Often there was no time even for the leaders and initiators to master the nuances of a given situation, and to explain these in a policy paper would only make it harder to decide what to do. The essential thing was to form a plan and then champion it.

Almost as "fundamental" was the craft of persuading others to approve the plan. This entailed bureaucratic infighting, but need not be petty if conducted with skill and success. One sees that for Acheson, being a statesman and being a man of State were practically the same thing. Chapter-titles—"Chief Lobbyist for State," "Washington Agent for the Marshall Mission"—indicate the nature of his apprenticeship. His book is full of shrewd professional lore on how to resolve committee deadlocks, how to solace ruffled egos, how to twist arms, how to get signatures on documents. If we look again at Acheson's remarks on the Greek affair, in this context, they take on a rather different significance:

> When we convened . . . to open the subject with our Congressional masters, I knew we were met at Armageddon. These Congressmen had no conception of what challenged them; it was my task to bring it home. No time was left for measured appraisal.

For Acheson, that is, the true crisis —"Armageddon"—was apparently not in Greece or Asia Minor or North Africa. It was in and around the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in Washington, D.C. The problem of how to convince "our masters" to sanction the administration's proposals was for Acheson as crucial as whether the proposals were intrinsically sound. Or rather, the two became indistinguishable: good policy was policy that got votes, which meant simple policy sketched in primary colors.

Put like that, it sounds awful. Measured against some ideal standard—not, alas, a standard adhered to by any powerful nation in world history—it *is* awful, when the stakes are so high and the parallax of retrospect raises doubts about the basis of almost every judgment. Measured against the conduct of other nations on the world stage, that of the United States strikes me as above average, though that is not saying much. The central irony of these Achesonian activities seems to be that they were attempts to avoid previous errors, to do *something*, to dominate events instead of drifting, to think big and to act fast, to win friends and influence people. They were not villainous and conspiratorial, as some radical analysts suggest; or rather, they were pretty much in accord with the views and wishes of the majority of Congress and the American people. It would have helped us if Dean Acheson had argued the toss with his critics in *Present at the Creation*, instead of maintaining such a poker face. The odds are that he and his policies are neither so praiseworthy as his narrative demurely hints, nor as blameworthy as the analysts assert.

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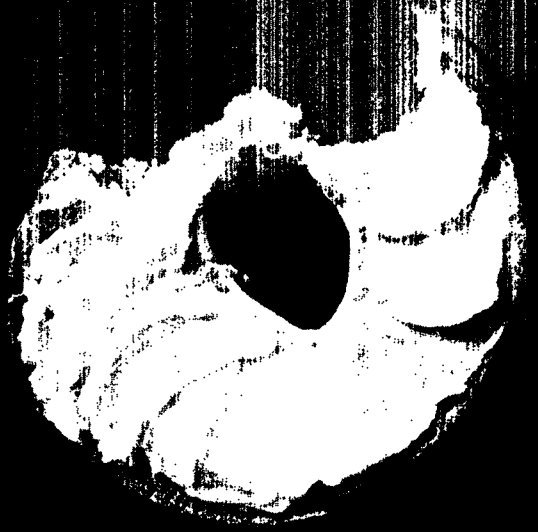

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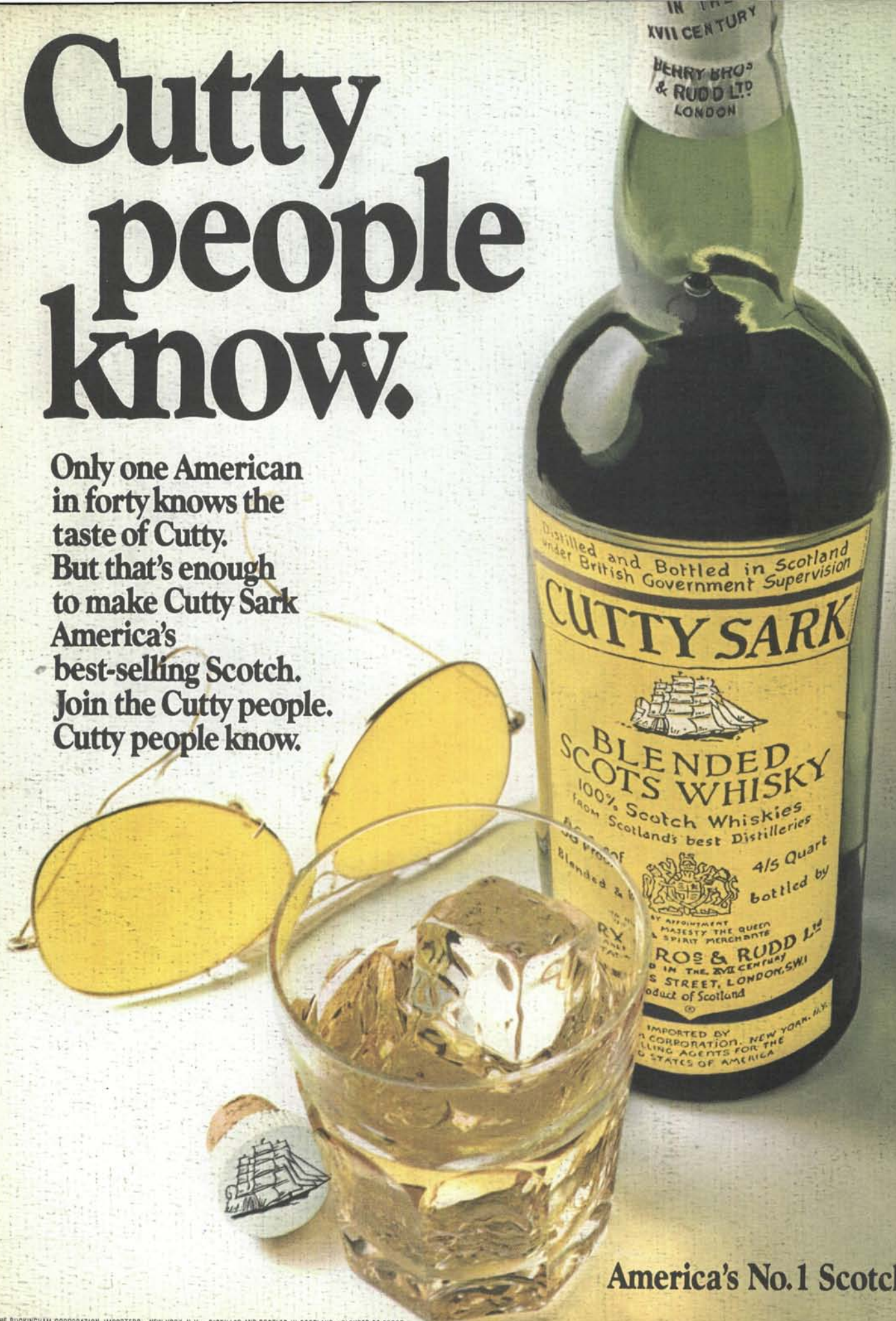
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